

**Report of the
Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee
Montgomery County, Maryland:**

A Generation of Youth Hanging in the Balance



DECEMBER 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Acknowledgements | 3 |
| PURPOSE OF THE LATINO YOUTH COLLABORATIVE | 5 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY | 7 |
| BACKGROUND AND STEERING COMMITTEE APPROACH | 9 |
| OVERARCHING MONTGOMERY COUNTY ISSUES | 12 |
| 2.1 County response to immigration | 12 |
| 2.2 Cultural and linguistic competency in public and private service operations | 13 |
| 2.3 Trust among County residents and public officials | 14 |
| 2.4 Community participation in decision making | 15 |
| 2.5 Need for better data collection, analysis, and dissemination | 15 |
| 2.6 Accountability of institutions and persons that serve the public | 16 |
| 3.0 POLICY ISSUES SUBGROUP | 17 |
| 3.1 Subgroup Members and Affiliations | 17 |
| 3.1.a Core ideas | 18 |
| 3.1.b Current situation in Montgomery County | 19 |
| 3.2 Policy Issues Recommendations | 23 |
| 4.0 RESPONSIVE SERVICES SUBGROUP | 30 |
| 4.1 Subgroup Members and Affiliations | 30 |
| 4.1.a Core ideas | 31 |
| 4.1.b Current situation in Montgomery County | 35 |
| 4.2 Responsive Services Recommendations | 36 |
| 5.0 SOCIAL INTEGRATION SUBGROUP | 45 |
| 5.1 Subgroup Members and Affiliations | 45 |
| 5.1.a Core ideas | 46 |
| 5.1.b Current situation in Montgomery County | 47 |
| 5.2 Social Integration Recommendations | 48 |
| 6.0 CONCLUSIONS and FUTURE MONITORING | 55 |

Acknowledgements

The work of the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee truly has been a collaborative endeavor, with representatives from every facet of Montgomery County life playing a part in the exploration, analysis, and recommendations related to the lives of Latino youth and their families.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of many members of our community for their outstanding contributions and clear commitment to this important work:

County Executive Isiah Leggett, who recognized the urgency of responding to the data presented by Identity, Inc. and commissioned the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee and brought government to the table.

County Council Health and Human Services Committee and its Chair, George Leventhal for recognizing the importance of this issue and for encouraging action.

Board of Education members, with special acknowledgement for **Shirley Brandman and Laura Berthiaume** for their very active participation in the process and significant leadership.

Identity, Inc., for their initial needs assessment which gathered critical information from our youth and produced data that sounded the alarms for the youth in our County.

The members of the **Steering Committee and Sub-groups** shared their insight, their expertise, and their commitment to creating real solutions and pathways for our youth to find success, happiness and fulfillment. We thank them for their time and effort in this process. Special thanks must go to the co-chairs of the subgroups (noted with *) who worked tremendously hard to develop recommendations that would lead to change.

The following individuals contributed to the work of the Latino Youth Collaborative:

Uma S. Ahluwalia
MCDHHS
Gabriel Albornoz
Recreation Department
John Alcoba
Montgomery County Public Schools
Anna Anderson
CASA de Maryland
Monica Barberis-Young
Interfaith Works
Chris Barclay
Board of Education
Marielsa Bernard
Montgomery County Circuit Court
Laura Berthiaume
Board of Education
Frankie Blackburn
Impact Silver Spring
Cassandra Boyd
Department of Economic Development

Shirley Brandman*
Board of Education
Fran Brenneman
MCDHHS
Marcela Campoli
Spanish Catholic Center
Luis Cardona
MCDHHS
Wendy Cervantes
First Focus
Raymond Crowel
MCDHHS
Christine DelCid
Department of Corrections
Rosalinda Delgado
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Victor DelPino
Montgomery County's State's Attorney's Office
Silvia Diaz
MCDHHS
John Dowdy
Alfred E. Noyes Children's Center

Mark Drury
Shapiro and Duncan
Dr. Marguerite Duane
Spanish Catholic Center
Sharon Friedman
Mental Health Association
Miti Figueredo
Councilmember Navarro's Office
Phillip F. Gainous
MCAASP
Celia Gamboa
Community Bridges
Soraya Galeas
Planned Parenthood
Kate Garvey**
MCDHHS
Maria Garcia
MCPS, ESOL
Dave Gillespie
MCPD
Maria Gomez
Mary's Center

The following contributed to the work of the Latino Youth Collaborative:

Norca Goeller

Mary's Center

Gustavo Goldstein

DHHS

Rachel Glass

Montgomery County Adult

English Literacy Coalition

Evelyn Gonzales Mills

Montgomery College

Enid Gonzales Aleman

LAAG

Robert L. Green

Department of Corrections

Wilmer Gutierrez

Councilmember

Trachtenberg's Office

Carlos Hamlin

MCPS

Walton Harris

Councilmember

Leventhal's Office

Karla Hoffman

GUIDE Program

Luis Hurtado

MCPS

Wayne Jerman*

MCPD

Candace Kattar*

Identity, Inc

Barbara Kaufmann

Department of Economic

Development

Blanca Kling

MCPD

Kathy Lally*

Collaboration Council

Betty Lam

MCDHHS

Erick Lang

MCPS

Helen Lettlow

MCDHHS

Chris Lloyd

MCEA

Ana Lopez*

Community Bridges

Molly Love

TAYA Health Connections

Fred Lowenbach

Commonweal Foundation

Ja'Bette Lozupone

LAAG

Monica Martin

DHHS

Tom Manger

MCPD

Genevieve Martinez-Garcia

Independent Researcher

Vicki Medina

MCPS, ESOL

Luisa Montero-Diaz*

LAYC

Henry Montes**

LAAG

Sonia Mora

DHHS

Taleah Parker

TAYA Health Connections

Daniel Parra

LAAG

Raymond Moreno

IMPACT Silver Spring

Dennis Nial

DJS

Joy Nurmi

Eastern Regional Service Center

Carmen Ortiz-Larsen

LAAG

Barbara Ott

YMCA

Mara Parker

Councilmember Elrich's Office

Beth Perry

Mary's Center

Captain Terrance Pierce

MCPD

Rosie Ramirez

MCPS

Alexis Reed

Councilmember Navarro's

Office

Heather Richie

Montgomery County Adult

English Literacy Coalition

Celia Rivas

LAAG

Grace Rivera-Oven

LAAG

Ron Rivlin

DHHS

Reemberto Rodriquez

Silver Spring Regional Center

Agnes Saenz

Community Ministries of

Rockville

Elena Saenz

Montgomery College

Jose Segura

Department of Recreation

Maurice Sessoms

DJS

Karishma Sheth

MHA

Karla Silvestre*

Office of Community

Partnerships

Tim "Smitty" Smith

City of Gaithersburg

Ilene Sparber

ICAP

Jim Stowe

Office of Human Rights

Dr. Ulder Tillman

DHHS

Diego Uriburu**

Identity, Inc.

Patty Vitale

Councilmember Leventhal's

Office

Becky Wagner

Interfaith Works

Art Wallenstein

Office of Corrections

Carol Walsh

Collaboration Council

Chuck Welch

MCPD

Stephanie White

Department of Recreation

Ranita Williams

DHHS

Stephanie Williams

MCPS

Karen Woodson

MCPS, ESOL

Teresa Wright

MCPS, ESOL

Vivian Yao

County Council

****LYC Steering Committee
Co-Chairs**

PURPOSE OF THE LATINO YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

The purpose of the Latino Youth Collaborative is to bring about action that will save a generation of Latino youth. This is a courageous and forceful response by Montgomery County elected officials and representatives from the private and public sector. The document that follows is about human potential and the opportunities and obligations of a community to support the positive development of the young people who live in it. Here we focus on Latino youth—real Latino girls and boys, young women and men, who reside in Montgomery County, Maryland. We shine a light on the ways youth can actualize their potential for living, and contribute to a quality life as they grow with the County. We show how institutions and individuals can commit to actions that will ensure positive outcomes for all youth. This document is about change and the consequences of failing to respond to the present situation affecting Latino youth in our County.

The impetus to act began with a survey administered to more than 1 000 County Latino youth in 2006 which surfaced grave problems for many members of our Latino community. What did the survey uncover? Youth shared that they had high levels of social and language isolation; feeling unsafe in their communities, schools and homes; feeling disliked by society; lacking involvement in pro-social activities; lacking support from their families; lacking trusting and responsible relationships with other adults; not accessing the County's social services and supports; feeling disconnected from their schools; having low expectations for their futures, and feeling a widespread sense of hopelessness. These underlying factors pervade the lives of many of our Latino youth and feed the negative behavioral outcomes that have become all too familiar: high teen pregnancy rates, gang involvement, substance abuse, high school drop-out rates, poor academic achievement, youth violence and the ongoing devastation of the Latino family structure. These problems are a product of the failure to provide Latino youth with the tools, skills and supports needed for successful development and our failure to properly nurture the potential within each young person. The current data for the Latino youth in the County show that these problems persist and are worsening in some categories.

The results of the survey were presented to the County Council and to members of the Montgomery County Board of Education, as well as to the County Executive, who committed, along with Latino community members who presented the data, to address these problems through a concerted County-wide effort.. More than 60 stakeholder individuals and organizations were gathered together to form the Montgomery County Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee in August 2009. The charge of the group was to study the critical areas of education, violence prevention and well- being and to develop strategies for the future. Three Steering Committee subgroups were established to do this work, focusing on (1) policies, (2) responsive services, and (3) social integration. It is their work that informs this report. The Latino Youth Collaborative as a whole focused on the underlying factors at a County-wide and systems level to ensure our effectiveness in order to save this and future generations of Latino youth.

We ask you, the reader, to view this document through a prism of continuous and evolving quality improvement for the County. The intent of the information, findings, and recommendations are to transform the County into a better place to live for everyone. To attain this goal, this document provides guidance through concrete steps for making critical changes in the structure and practices in the County that will result in the enhancement of the lives of County Latino youth and their families.

As you read this document, we encourage you to carefully consider what the recommended changes mean for you, as a resident, leader, business owner, and/or parent in the County. We also encourage you to think about how your life and your future are inextricably linked to the lives and futures of these young people. Montgomery County's future as a whole will depend on our individual and collective decisions to either become part of the solution, or to stand by and witness the destruction of a generation of young people. Failure to act will produce tremendous negative results for all of us. We invite you to contribute to this document's implementation no matter how small or large your role may be. Every action step that we each take will add to the success of overall advancement. The time to act is now; failure cannot be an option.

Finally, and most importantly, we want to speak directly to our County Latino families. Although we as a County have made mistakes, we hope this year-long effort will be seen as a commitment to and appreciation of the Latino community's contributions to the County. We need you to trust us; to get involved and guide us through this process. We share the same goal; which is for all our children to have the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. We cannot be successful in implementing the recommendations of this report without you. We need to work side by side with you, we need you to guide us, and most importantly, we need you to hold us and all responsible entities accountable to carry out these recommendations. Together we can! Si se puede!

Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee



RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee (LYCSC) Report provides insight into the experience of Latino youth and their families and suggests a pathway for Montgomery County to take to assure their well-being and success in the future. Through a collaborative process of analysis and planning, the LYCSC has identified the critical barriers facing Latino youth and recommends the strategies to overcome these barriers. As all aspects of life are included in this report, action and accountability are needed in all sectors of public and private life. The settings range from schools, to social services offices, to homes, to non-profit organizations. The following recommendations call the County to action to aggressively address the issues throughout the systems in the County and to build on the successful approaches that currently exist in the County and elsewhere. The expectations for the implementation of these recommendations are high and will be driven by accountability mechanisms that require productivity, transparency, and effectiveness.

The recommendations are organized according to the three sub-groups of the LYCSC: Policy Issues, Responsive Services and Social Integration. These three areas allowed for the development of comprehensive solutions to complex problems. There are critical action steps that bring these recommendations to life that can be found in each of the subgroup's respective reports.

Policy Issues Recommendations

1. Address the disproportionately high rates of academic ineligibility among Latino youth in Montgomery County Public Schools.
2. Change existing voluntary withdrawal practices in the Montgomery County Public School system.
3. Develop policies and implement strategies for increasing career/job-based education opportunities for Montgomery County Public Schools students.
4. Advocate for the creation of an Adult High School to serve adults who do not complete high school in the traditional manner.
5. Oversee the County's use of the GangNET database and ensure it continues to demonstrate successful compliance with federal protection of privacy rights and collection of personal data.
6. Review Montgomery County Police Department's existing stop-and-frisk and field investigation/interrogation policies and request and analyze data related to the stopping, frisking and photographing of young Latino males.
7. Address issues related to contact with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by Montgomery County Police Department.
8. Identify whether existing County services are reaching Latino target populations and areas where the Latino community is disproportionately represented or negatively impacted.

Responsive Services Recommendations

1. Expand out-of-school-time programs that are accessible, culturally competent, and respond to the needs of Latino youth.
2. Transform schools into neighborhood-based hubs that provide comprehensive services and education opportunities in a safe environment for all community members.
3. Assist the school system in addressing the complex needs of youth and assure that quality out-of-school-time and positive youth development programs are available and implemented (particularly in high priority locations defined as high poverty and low achievement areas in the County).
4. Increase the number and quality of Student Service Learning (SSL) opportunities for Latino youth.
5. Develop policies and implement strategies to support Latino youth who are no longer in school. This would include increasing career/job-based education and training.

6. Ensure sufficient high quality professional development opportunities that strengthen skills for non-profit youth workers working in out-of-school-times programs with Latino youth.
7. Identify and enhance the capability of key entry points in Montgomery County to connect with Latino families and assess their needs.
8. Add leadership and empowerment components for parents in existing youth and family programs (unless this compromises youth participation) in order to increase parental participation in these programs as well as to ensure programs are meeting the needs of participants.
9. Enhance the utilization of community lay workers (*promotoras*) as a key culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and public education approach among government, school, and nonprofits working with Latino parents and families.
10. Adopt standards for mental health services that ensure all mental health service providers receiving County funding provide services that are accessible, reflect cultural and linguistic competence, and demonstrate accountability.
11. Increase awareness, and improve utilization, of mental health services among Latino community members.
12. Increase support for the Latino Health Initiative Foreign Trained Health Professionals initiative to increase the number of mental health therapists in the County.
13. Build upon neighborhood-based support networks that offer meaningful supports and connections. Increase efforts to assist Latino families to build and strengthen their natural support networks that will result in a more cooperative and resilient neighborhood.

Social Integration Recommendations

1. Launch an ongoing public relations and communications campaign by County government that promotes Latino youth and their families as valuable, hard-working members of our community.
2. Improve the cultural and linguistic competence of each County department.
3. Establish a Latino ombudsman in the Office of the County Executive to assure accountability of equitable treatment of Latinos in all areas of government services.
4. Strengthen the accountability to and equitable treatment of the Latino community by Montgomery County Public Schools by funding independent public/private entities to fill advocacy gaps for Latino parents.
5. County Boards, Committees and Commissions will develop and include in their respective action plans strategies that are responsive to the needs of the Latino community. In addition they will ensure that there is Latino representation on boards with particular focus on the following: 1) Children and Youth, 2) Juvenile Justice, 3) Health, 4) Five Regional Centers' Citizen Advisory Boards.
6. Build on MCPS's efforts to empower Latino parents to better understand and integrate into the school system to enable them to better advocate for their children's education.
7. Increase responsiveness, accountability, and respect towards Latino families by school staff and administration resulting in their high expectations for Latino families. This includes providing them with all the necessary support and equitable treatment for ensuring Latino students' success.
8. Increase Latino graduation rates at Montgomery College and other universities, including The Universities at Shady Grove and the University of Maryland.
9. Provide Latino youth and families with the necessary tools, knowledge, and access in order to strengthen their civic engagement capabilities.

1.0 BACKGROUND AND STEERING COMMITTEE APPROACH

To “put oneself in the shoes” of County Latino youth, Identity, Inc., a nonprofit community-based organization working with Latino youth and their families, administered an assessment survey completed by and for more than 1,000 Latino youth. After analyzing the results of this assessment survey and Montgomery County Public Schools data, Identity, Inc. leadership realized that it was critical to share these data with County public policy decision makers. In collaboration with the Latino Community Task Force of the Montgomery County Latino Health Steering Committee and other community-based organization members, Latino community members presented the results of the assessment survey first to the Health and Human Services Committee of the County Council. Community members also presented the survey findings to members of the Montgomery County Board of Education and the County Executive.

As a result of these presentations, County Executive Isiah Leggett directed task force members to work with the Latin American Advisory Group to develop recommendations that would impact these major problem areas. Three co-chairs were selected: a representative from the task force, a representative of the Latin American Advisory Group, and a County official responsible for children, youth, and family services. These co-chairs established the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee and invited key County stakeholders to join.

The Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee first met August 2009. The meeting included more than 60 representatives from a diverse array of public and private organizations and agencies. Each attendee represented a perspective that has a stake in the future of Montgomery County youth. Included in the meeting were elected officials from the County Council and Board of Education, County Departments and representatives from the Montgomery County Public Schools, and high-level administrators from a variety of community-based organizations.

The initial meeting of the Steering Committee set the tone and direction for the effort to be undertaken over the year by focusing on the following:

- Gaining an understanding of how individual commitments lead to group success
- Current key data reflecting the historical, immigration, and economic conditions affecting Latino youth
- Perspectives of Latino youth on their circumstance and future

Information delivered at this meeting was particularly instructive for those not familiar with the experiences of immigrant Latino youth. Attendees learned about young people residing in Montgomery County who had been exposed to war, undergone pain and suffering, and experienced death of loved ones in their home countries. These are the same youth who are also currently embroiled in complex immigration issues and substandard economic realities in the United States.

Meeting members also learned that Latino youth, whether they are US or foreign born, are pessimistic about “the world around them” in Montgomery County, as well as their future. Approximately half of Latino youth in the survey stated they did not see a future for themselves filled with hope and promise. Latino youth shared their stories and observations with Steering Committee members who were able to hear directly the profound challenges facing Latino youth in the County.

During the first meeting of the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee, it was agreed that the basic structure for the effort would include a Steering Committee and three Subgroups dealing with social integration, policy issues, and responsive services respectively. Discussion at the meeting suggested that the best approach would include specific topic areas within these three subgroup categories. This method allowed for identifiable problem areas to be surfaced while considering the underlying risk and protective factors which either contribute to or ameliorate these problems.

The following are aspects the operational plan that was established for the Latino Youth Collaborative, including its structure, goals, and areas of interest/concern:

Overarching Goal of Latino Youth Collaborative Effort:

To ensure the sustainable improvements in the quality of life for Latino youth and their families and conditions residing in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Operational Plan Goals:

1. Develop a functioning Steering Committee for the Latino Youth Collaborative effort with a diverse mix of County government and non-government officials who have a stake in the future lives and conditions of Latinos in the County.
2. Establish a conceptual framework for the Steering Committee to address the key concerns and policies adversely affecting Latino youth and their families' lives and conditions in the County.
3. Establish three working subgroups of the Steering Committee to deal with the three categories of concern—social integration, policy issues, and responsive services.
4. Conduct sufficient investigation, research analysis, group discussions and report formulation to provide sound recommendations regarding what it will take to ensure sustainable improvement in the quality of Latino youth and their families' lives and conditions in the County.
5. Formulate reports that go beyond recommendations listings and develop specific action steps with performance measures and identification of responsible individuals for getting the actions accomplished.
6. Disseminate reports' main and major recommendations and actions so that all stakeholders can determine a role in their implementation in serving the County Latino youth and their families.

Subgroup Structure/Charges

Subgroup on Policy Issues: The Goal of this workgroup was to **examine the development and implementation of equitable system policies that impact Latino youth and their families.** It examined systems that operate in the three topic areas and the specific effects that the systems' policies may have on creating disparities in how such policies are operationalized when it comes to Latino youth and their families.

Subgroup on Responsive Services: The Goal of this workgroup was to **provide opportunities for Latino youth and their families to thrive in participating in County life.** It examined what kind of services and the method by which they were delivered would be most beneficial to Latino youth and their families.

Subgroup on Social Integration: The Goal of this workgroup was to **look at ways to assure that Latino youth and their families are valued and welcomed as members of the County.** It explored the relationships of Latino youth and their families with various segments of the County while considering the specific elements of the three topics noted above and how the topics can be adjusted to enhance the social integration of Latino youth and their families.

The co-chairs for each subgroup had one representative from County government and the other a leader from the non-profit community. Membership in each subgroup included representatives of the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee as well as those with subject area expertise that would inform the work of the respective subgroup.

The subgroups used various methods to fully explore their subject areas and to develop recommendations, including: literature searches; expert interviews; focus group input from Latino youth, parents, and service providers; and subgroup member experiences. Simultaneously, Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee members finalized the Operational Plan, recruited members to join subgroups, reported on progress, discussed related issues, provided case studies, identified crucial challenges and main cross cutting issues, and offered a framework for reporting uniformly.

Rather than annotate every detail of all the aforementioned discussions, this document offers overarching themes. We believe these critical points paint a landscape for how we need to examine the issues as we consider the recommendations. Specific descriptions of each subgroup, its membership, and the results of its findings as relevant to the recommendations are presented. Recommendations and plans for future monitoring follow each subgroup report. The latter is necessary for ensuring that responsible parties are accountable for implementing the recommendations and processes.

The willingness of subgroup and Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee members to commit to extra work of this magnitude and the dedication with which the work was accomplished, reflect very positively on Montgomery County.



3.0 OVERARCHING MONTGOMERY COUNTY ISSUES

While this document focuses on Latino youth and their families, there are overarching issues that affect Montgomery County as a whole that have relevance for this report. These issues impact all residents as they live out their lives and interact with County government and organizations. It is critical to understand and address these issues in order to ensure that all residents are able to enjoy a supportive, responsive, effective and equitable community and government.

The Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee and subgroups identified the following issues as overarching in Montgomery County:

1. County response to immigration
2. Cultural and linguistic competency in public and private service operations
3. Trust among County residents and public officials
4. Community participation in decision making about public sector issues
5. Need for better data collection, analysis, and dissemination
6. Accountability of institutions and persons that serve the public

While not an exhaustive list, these issues are illustrative of the context within which we did our work. Below is a detailed description of each issue.

2.1 County response to immigration

This review of overarching issues begins with the topic of immigration in order to send a clear message that Montgomery County embraces, welcomes and values our immigrant communities. A better understanding of the impact of immigration on our children and families will allow us to move forward on these recommendations in the most effective way.

Immigration impacts every aspect of a Latino child's wellbeing, regardless of his or her immigration status. Harassment and discrimination based on race/ethnicity and immigration status are particularly damaging during adolescence, a formative developmental stage where one's identity is defined. Negative anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiments are leading some Latino youth to reject their parents, cultural values, and heritage. This contextual issue is too pervasive not to be taken seriously as we suggest recommendations to remedy the barriers and obstacles Latino youth encounter while striving for a quality life in Montgomery County.

For those youth who have at least one family member who is undocumented, the impact of this on their wellbeing is profound. It can be the deciding factor of whether or not families will: live apart for years with little or no personal contact or live together as a strong unit; whether or not children will live with a sense of security or with a daily fear and uncertainty that a parent may not return home after work one day because s/he was caught up in an immigration raid; whether or not children can dream of a higher education or must live with the bleak, hopeless reality that a higher education can only be the dream of others; whether or not a young person will advance in the workplace or will forever work in the shadows; whether or not young people will grow up in a community that offers them security and a sense of dignity or in a community where a sense of apprehension and shame is the norm.

It is imperative that Montgomery County maintain its policy of leaving immigration enforcement to the Federal Government. Although Montgomery County has proven to be a place of progressive thinking and equitable policies for providing services to all its residents, the national anti-immigrant sentiment has flowed into the County through local media and vociferous individuals unsupportive of County policies regarding immigration issues. In general, the County's policy toward immigrants has been to consider them productive and contributing residents of the County. To date, the County government has rightly seen immigration as a positive force and influence for its contributions to the economic and cultural growth of the County and to overall community safety and security. Montgomery County has not signed on to participate in Section 287 (g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which trains local police officers to enforce federal immigration law.

This approach is particularly important with respect to public safety concerns for immigrant residents, documented or undocumented. Trust by all immigrant communities that the County will continue the policy of not requiring local law enforcement to take on the role of federal immigration officers is critically important. It can make the difference in the degree to which assistance is provided to law enforcement with their investigative work or an individual's willingness to come forward when he or she has become a victim of a crime. For this reason it is essential that any breach of policy is addressed quickly, honestly, and transparently, and is followed immediately with appropriate consequences for those causing the breach. Further, to reduce the potential for the undermining of trust in the community, it is important that those in government who have responsibilities that require interaction with immigrants be culturally and linguistically competent. For this to be effective, cultural and linguistic sensitivity needs to be reinforced on an on-going basis. Furthermore, those in government must avoid acting on myths and misinformation regarding immigration.

2.2 Cultural and linguistic competency in public and private sector service operations

The work of the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee began with a review of historical factors that have affected some of the youth who currently live in Montgomery County. War, trauma, poverty, and separation have influenced all youth whose home countries or those of their parents, have been torn apart by conflict. This is important information for those who work with youth and their families to understand in order to be successful in their efforts. This is an illustration of the critical role cultural competence plays in effective service provision. The failure to fully understand critical life events of Montgomery County youth gravely impedes our ability to support them in future endeavors.

The Office of Minority Health of the United States Department of Health and Human Services defines cultural competence as:

“...a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations. ‘Culture’ refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. ‘Competence’ implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities.”

(Adapted from Cross, T., Bazron, B., Dennis, K., & Isaacs, M. (1989). Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care, Volume I.)

Cultural competence (or lack of thereof) is not an abstract concept. It is something that affects all residents of Montgomery County as they carry out their daily activities. County residents build a relationship of trust and allegiance with our government when they have positive experiences, are treated with dignity and respect, and feel that the County understands their needs and acts to meet those needs in the most appropriate manner. Those who are not treated with dignity and respect, and feel the County does not understand them and their needs, detach themselves from County government and may live in isolation.

The Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee calls for the establishment and maintenance of a systemic approach to cultural competence which includes the following elements:

- A concrete Countywide commitment to the importance of cultural competence.
- A requirement that all organizations (public and private) that have an impact on individuals from multiple cultures assess their capacity, policies, and personnel in relation to cultural competence.
 - Based on that assessment, actions will be taken to assure that each organization has a plan to address any gaps in their capacity to appropriately serve individuals from multiple cultures.
- Organizations are held accountable for their cultural and linguistic competence.
- Organizations acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and adapt to the cultural contexts of the communities they serve.
- Organizations reassess policies and practices routinely and make adjustments as necessary.
- Training and capacity-building opportunities are utilized by organizations and agencies.
- Organizational and individual cultural competency are on-going processes and not one-time events.
- Competencies are learned through interpersonal experiences and transactions.

A number of recommendations from the three subgroups related to cultural competence can be found later in this document. These recommendations either explicitly call for cultural competence or reflect a need that has developed due to a lack of cultural competence within respective organizations.

2.3 Trust among County residents and public officials

Trust bridges government and those whom it governs. In communities where this trust exists, residents expect that their government will respond to their needs and have their best interests in mind. They expect they will be treated fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect. The absence of this treatment has multiple consequences. Residents may withdraw from interaction with public agencies so that they may not receive needed benefits or share critical information regarding public safety or community functioning. Discord may grow and cooperation among residents and government staff may diminish. The quality of the relationship between residents and government agencies is critically important to ensure a strong, safe, and thriving community, not just for a limited number of residents, but for all county residents. Trust is earned over time through consistent positive behavior.

The Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee is concerned by what is currently occurring in Montgomery County. Public trust has been shaken among members of the Latino community due to mounting anti-immigrant sentiment voiced by some individuals and groups, inadequate cultural competence in systems serving Latinos, a lack of public input in political decision-making, and a failure to be responsive to the needs of the Latino community.

As tensions regarding immigration grow and as our resources are more limited, the already strained relationship between government agencies and residents may be negatively impacted. Those who determine policy or implement it have an obligation to serve members of the community fairly and with dignity. Montgomery County must meet this obligation for all its residents and must hold those accountable who fail to do so. In supporting the work of the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee, the County Executive, County Council, Board of Education, and community stakeholders have taken a key step in demonstrating a commitment and willingness to address this issue of trust.

2.4 Community participation in decision making about public sector issues

Montgomery County welcomes public input and public participation. It has several avenues for obtaining community input in the decision making process including the official systems of County commissions, town hall meetings, written communication to elected officials, the County Executive's ethnic advisory groups, and other types of public gatherings to obtain community input. While all these efforts have been extended, it is clear that the Latino community has played only a limited role in decision-making. As a result, Latinos have not participated in many key decisions that affect or will affect them in the future. This has contributed to the Latino community's feeling disenfranchised and not fully integrated as equal participants in Montgomery County decision-making.

Nearly 15% of the overall Montgomery County population, and 1 in 4 children younger than 5 years of age, are Latino. Given this notable population proportion, it is critical that Montgomery County takes a more proactive approach toward obtaining input and decisions from Latino stakeholders.

Some Latino residents participate in traditional public forums with no assistance or encouragement needed. Others may only attend when community-based organizations assist in bringing them to these meetings. Montgomery County should examine the accessibility, timing and locations of public meetings and ensure that opportunities are provided for those who work and have multiple obligations. More efforts need to be made to include Latinos in the decision making process for general community issues and issues that directly affect them. Clear and transparent communication processes need to be put into place when a decision is made to make clear why the decision was made and how input was considered. Montgomery County must not only receive input from Latino community members but also make them active partners in crafting policies or projects that will have an impact on the Latino community. The County should invest more staff time and resources to help mentor and develop the many grassroots Latino leaders who exist in our neighborhoods to more actively participate in established systems for community input.

2.5 Need for better data collection, analysis, and dissemination of data

In paraphrasing a maxim used by planners, what is not measured is not considered important. Montgomery County and its departments, offices, and agencies have many data collection mechanisms including the establishment of a County-wide method titled, "*County Stat*," for examining the performance of these County government organizations. County Stat has worked with all County

departments to create a set of outcome-based performance measures. These measures are used to discuss and address policy and operational challenges that lead to the development of strategies. While this demonstrates progress and a greater commitment to accountability, there still exist gaps in the system. Like many processes in a large bureaucracy, some departments and systems are more efficient and effective in dealing with data they produce while others use antiquated systems and need better ways of capturing information across systems.

This is an overarching issue for the Latino Youth Collaborative because few Montgomery County systems collect data on the level of participation and service to the Latino community. It is critical for every department to collect and use data to determine the quality and effectiveness of the services they provide. It is in this process where accountability measures must be built to assure they are serving all members of the community well and equitably. This information should be shared publicly and addressed collectively.

2.6 Greater accountability of institutions and persons that serve the public

The LYCSC members believe that institutions, public and private, should be called upon to maintain greater accountability. Monitoring the performance of those who serve the community is essential to ensuring positive outcomes for Latino youth and their families. It is critical to obtain continuous feedback from the community in order to regularly assess effectiveness and the manner in which organizations are conducting themselves. All institutions, including organized labor, must put in place procedures that allow for appropriate and timely disciplinary measures for individuals who fail to treat the public in an ethical, professional and respectful manner. This process must be transparent and standards of performance must be high and they must be reiterated regularly to all staff.

This report is a first step in a long-term commitment to the future. The subgroup reports that follow show the pathway that we as a County should take in order to make good on this commitment.



SUBGROUP REPORTS

3.0 POLICY ISSUES SUBGROUP

3.1 Subgroup Members and Affiliations

The co-chairs of the Policy Issues subgroup were Shirley Brandman, Montgomery County Board of Education member, and Candace Katter, Executive Director of Identity, Inc., a nonprofit community-based organization serving Latino youth and their families. Henry Montes, Co-chair of the County Executive's Latin American Advisory Group, served as liaison for the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee.

The following list of organizations reflect the varied perspectives represented on the Policy Issues subgroup¹ (in alphabetical order):

- Alfred E. Noyes Children's Center
- Commonwealth Foundation
- Department of Youth Services, City of Gaithersburg
- Gang Prosecution Unit, Montgomery County, State Attorney's Office
- Identity, Inc.
- IMPACT Silver Spring
- Independent community researcher on reproductive health
- Montgomery College
- Montgomery County Association of Administrative and Supervisory Personnel
- Montgomery County Board of Education
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Montgomery County Education Association
- Montgomery County Executive's Latin American Advisory Group
- Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Office of County Councilmember Nancy Navarro
- Shapiro and Duncan, Inc. Mechanical Contractors

Process followed by Policy Issues subgroup

The Policy Issues subgroup examined existing public policies (both formal and informal) likely to inhibit Latino youth and their families from fully participating as engaged residents in Montgomery County activities. This subgroup studied the current state of public policies to help discern changes to public policies that would promote the fair and equitable treatment of Latino youth and their families. The subgroup included in the parameters of its charge an examination of both formal and informal policies and practices of County agencies.

¹ The participation of an individual in the Subgroup is not necessarily a reflection of the position of the agency or entity with which he or she is affiliated in regard to the Recommendations or any of the content of this Report. Individual members of the subgroup provided input to the subgroup according to their own experiences and expertise, and their views do not bind their agency or employer.

Invitations to participate in the Policy Issues subgroup were issued and subgroup members recruited others with needed knowledge and expertise. Subgroup and small workgroup meetings occurred monthly October 2009-June 2010. Each meeting was scheduled for two hours and meeting agendas were prepared and distributed to all members. Minutes were taken and a group email list was created and used to communicate with subgroup members. During initial subgroup meetings, members reviewed the charge to the group from the Steering Committee and the key data points that were shared at the initial Collaborative kick-off meeting.

The Policy Issues subgroup conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of the realities facing Latino youth. It looked at systems operating within the three major areas of concern (educational development, violence prevention, and wellbeing) and the disparities that may result from implementing existing policies and practices as well as those that result from the lack of policies. This involved several brainstorming sessions that generated an initial list of 30 identified policies and practices likely to inhibit Latino youth and their families from fully participating in County activities. In order to limit the number of policies and practices it would consider from each major area of concern, the Policy Issues subgroup ranked their three top priorities from each of the three areas of concern. The group ultimately selected eight distinct policy issues.

Small work groups each composed of 2-3 members volunteered to further develop one of the priority policy issues. To receive additional community input, subgroup members who provide direct services to the Latino community shared priority areas with their constituents and clients and invited comment. Subgroup chairs presented a status update on the work of their respective subgroup at each full monthly Steering Committee meeting. These updates were, in turn, reported back to subgroup members. At the June 9, 2010 Steering Committee meeting, the Policy Issues subgroup presented drafts of its policy recommendations and received feedback from the members. County Executive Office staff provided logistical support to the Policy Issues subgroup throughout this entire process.

3.1.a Core ideas

The charge from the Steering Committee included an examination of public policies likely to inhibit Latino youth and their families from fully participating in County activities. Authority for the development and/or implementation of certain identified policies or practices could lie with entities outside Montgomery County, such as at the state or federal governments. Recommendations could contain issues advocating to those entities that hold formal or legal precedence over the County so that they would be required to change an existing policy or implement a new policy.

While the Policy Issues subgroup recognized that policies could be implicit (informal unwritten protocols) or explicit (formally stated policies or practices), the subgroup wished to focus on policies most likely to result in meaningful recommendations. To assist in the selection of areas of focus, the subgroup adopted the following guiding questions:

- What will be the magnitude of the impact of the policy recommendation on Latino youth and families?
- Do we have the ability to monitor progress if the policy recommendation is put forth?
- Are there other options for responding to the issue (including other subgroups)?
- What is the likelihood of success?
- Is there a potential for alienating others?
- How reasonable is it in light of our timeline?

In developing its priority areas, the Policy Issues subgroup was cognizant that many of the policies identified do not operate in isolation. For example, the larger education challenge is to identify struggling students early in the academic journey and offer them meaningful and engaging intervention to keep them in school and support their academic achievement. The subgroup acknowledged that to achieve this larger goal incremental progress is necessary and, as a result, the subgroup identified specific, identifiable pieces of the larger picture on which to base its priority recommendations.

In looking at violence prevention, the Policy Issues subgroup understood that the core idea was the creation of a safe and welcoming environment, free from discrimination, for Latino youth and their families. It selected as its focus, law enforcement response to Latino youth.

With respect to wellbeing, the Policy Issues subgroup's capacity dictated its focus on the foundation of maximizing physical and mental health of Latino youth. The subgroup looked at how the County currently captures information about which services are being utilized, or possibly underutilized, by Latino youth and their families. This information can be analyzed to identify policy barriers to access as well as those areas, such as stops and searches by police or withdrawals from public schools, where Latino students may be overrepresented.

3.1.b Current situation in Montgomery County

The formation of the Latino Youth Collaborative was based on data relevant to the current crises affecting Latino youth in Montgomery County. Several critical issues presently affecting Latino families also received major public attention while the subgroup undertook its work. These include:

- Deteriorating police-Latino community relations and concerns about the effect on youth violence and public safety.
- Declining high school graduation rates for Latino students within Montgomery Public Schools.
- A mortgage/foreclosure crisis that continues to disproportionately affect Latino families.
- The passage of draconian immigration legislation targeting undocumented persons in Arizona.

The Policy Issues subgroup hoped to identify policies and practices that would result in:

- Improved Latino community-police relations.
- Improved level of engagement of Latino students within the school system.
- Identification of under- and over-utilization of County services by the Latino community.

What follows is a synopsis of some of the current factors that make the work of the subgroup relevant and amenable to creating improvements in the areas in which it focused.

Violence Prevention

Good community-police relations are necessary to ensure public safety. The majority of Montgomery County Latino immigrants are from certain Latin American countries where police corruption and involvement in human rights abuses is well documented and widespread. This presents the County with a greater challenge in developing and maintaining good police-Latino community relations. The Policy Issues subgroup thus focused on three areas: the need for a transparent gang database, issues related to police and Immigration and Customs Enforcement collaboration, and practices related to stopping and questioning of young Latino males.

Police estimate that between 2006 and 2008, the number of gang members in the County increased from 932 to 1206. While Latinos comprised 53% of the total number of gang members in 2006, this percentage dropped to 37% in 2008. Following a trend that began two years ago, the number of reported gang incidents in Montgomery County has continued its decline into the first quarter of 2010. These statistics are curious as gang violence has been steadily dropping and yet the total number of persons identified as gang members continues to rise.

Reports of police collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement spread quickly through any immigrant community. This is very significant in Montgomery County, where 65% of Latino residents are immigrants. Between 2007 and 2009, Immigration and Customs Enforcement doubled the number of individuals it picked up for deportation from Montgomery County jails. The percentage of incarcerated Latinos being held at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility grew to 33% in 2009 from 11% in 2003.

In June 2010, Identity, Inc. surveyed County Latino boys during a four-week period. Thirty-five Latino boys and young men, ages 14-27 years, were interviewed about interactions with County police officers. Following are some findings:

- The 35 male youth reported a total of 49 incidents involving police “stops.”
 - In only five of the 49 stops were youth arrested or given a citation for a violation of any law or ordinance.
 - In 31 of the 49 incidents youth reported they were simply walking along the street when they were stopped by a County police officer.
- The youth reported 37 incidents in which their shirts or sleeves were lifted by police officers to look for tattoos without permission being requested or given.
 - In 11 of the tattoo searches, youth reported photos of their tattoos were taken without permission.
- They reported 35 incidents of other photos taken without permission.
- The majority of the youth never asked for officers’ names even though they felt they had not been stopped for any violation of law. When asked why they did not write officers’ names, the responses most often given included: “What would I do with his name?” or “For what?”

The Policy Issues subgroup found a need to review the current Montgomery County Police Department’s stop-and-frisk policies in light of the incidents discussed above. There is reason to doubt the constitutionality of the stops and the subsequent searches and photographing of Latino males in the County, due to statements of youth who were stopped. Specific data is needed related to the number and type of stops of Latino males that are made by officers. In addition, copies of written protocols and policies related to investigatory police stops, and clarification regarding the storage of, access to and process for return or destruction of identifying data or photographs taken is needed as a result of police stops.

Educational Development

Good education outcomes for youth are critical for the wellbeing of the entire community. The Policy Issues subgroup focused on ways to keep youth engaged and in school. High expectations should be held for Latino students just as they are for all students. At the same time, the reality of the challenges facing many Latino students who come to schools as older students and often after interrupted educations must be acknowledged. Accordingly, the Policy Issues subgroup also explored alternatives to the traditional high school model as another way to prepare youth for future options.

The subgroup selected four policy issues that affect education outcomes for Latino youth: (1) the voluntary withdrawal of Latino students from Montgomery County Public Schools; (2) academic ineligibility for participation in particular school-sponsored extracurricular activities; (3) lack of career-based education opportunities; and (4) availability of Adult High School. While the Subcommittee chose these areas as the priorities it would address, a critical area that MCPS grapples with is the larger question of early identification and response to students who are struggling. These students need to be offered meaningful and engaging intervention to keep them in school and support their academic achievement.

Our delight with the general success of our public school system is dampened by the statistics for Latino youth within this system. The high school graduation rate for Latino students is 77.15%; lower than the graduation rate that has ever been recorded for Whites, Asian/Pacific Islanders, or African Americans since records began to be uniformly collected in 2002. The graduation rate for Latino students from Montgomery County Public Schools has decreased every year since 2003.

- **Latinos in Middle and High Schools have had the lowest attendance rate in MCPS for the past 15 years. Source: MSDE data**
- **Since 2002, Latinos have had the lowest graduation rate in MCPS (with the exception of one year--2003).**
- **Since 1993, Latinos have had the highest drop out rate in MCPS (with the exception of one year--2001)**
- **There was a 25% increase of Latino students who officially withdrew “voluntarily” from MCPS in 2008 as compared with 2007.**
 - **Source: 2009 Maryland Report Card**

While the high school dropout rate for White students in Montgomery County Public Schools is 1.34, for Latino youth it is an astounding 5.18. In 2008, Latino students comprised 40.2% of all voluntary withdrawals while only comprising about one-quarter of the school population. Related to this is the lack of alternative education opportunities for students who fail to complete high school. According to a recent Pew Hispanic Center Report, only one in ten Latino high school dropouts has a General Education Development (GED) credential. This is despite the fact that Latino youth throughout the United States have a higher high school dropout rate than Blacks and Whites. Thus, according to the Pew Report, “the major racial/ethnic group having the lowest high school graduation rate from the public schools is also the population least likely to have the ‘second chance’ credential providing opportunities for additional education.”

Many students who drop out of school, or are at risk of dropping out, complain that they do not see a connection between schooling and job skills. While Montgomery County Public Schools is deeply committed to ensuring all students are college-ready, data indicates that only 49.6% of Montgomery County Public Schools graduates have completed a college degree six years after high school

graduation. Though this far outpaces the national average, it points out that there are many students who do not get the full benefit of a college education. While it is important to continue to push for Latino students to be college-ready, it is critical to also ensure that the focus on college-readiness does not exclude attention to career/job-readiness. Preparing students for highly skilled trades allows students to support themselves and develop the self-reliance and confidence that support long-term success. For some students, the ability to support themselves makes it possible for them eventually to better afford college. Indeed, 41% of graduates from the MCPS Thomas Edison School of Technology complete a college degree within nine years after high school graduation and often with less education debt than their peers.

A key indicator of a student's engagement and motivation to stay in the classroom is academic performance. Students who are chronically academically ineligible are at greater risk of dropping out of high school and also are likely to disengage from instructional programs that prepare them for college and the workplace. Under existing Board of Education Policy IQD, students in middle and high schools must maintain a 2.0 average with no more than one failing grade in the previous marking period to be eligible to participate in particular school-sponsored extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities are considered the "standard" programs offered in each school that are operated by school staff, including athletics and non-athletic activities for example, chorus, drama, jazz ensemble, math Olympiads, newspaper and student government as well as a group of other activities determined by each school and operated by school staff as determined in their negotiated contract with the Montgomery County Education Association. Not all extracurricular activities require academic eligibility but those that do are acknowledged as central to the school experience.

The Policy Issues subgroup recognizes that the high rate of academic ineligibility among Latino youth is a crisis. Latino students who do not maintain a 2.0 average are in need of meaningful academic intervention. Cutting off ineligible Latino youth from school-based extra-curricular activities, however, often decreases their motivation to improve their academic performance. This can undermine their sense of belonging in the school community and leaves them excluded from certain school-sponsored after-school options. Board of Education Policy IQD also states that it is the obligation of the school system to make supports for maintaining academic performance and academic eligibility available to students.

Large numbers of students, particularly but not limited to the children of recent immigrants to this country, do not complete high school and thereby fail to obtain a standard diploma. In response, many jurisdictions across the United States have incorporated "Adult High Schools" as an additional opportunity for students to earn a high school diploma. A Montgomery County Adult High School would help meet the needs of young people who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to complete their education in the setting of a traditional, comprehensive high school. An Adult High School, set in a separate facility, would provide young people who are not attending high school the flexibility to attend day and/or evening classes and generally allow them to continue their education while addressing their individual life needs.

Well-being

Services for poor and socially and/or linguistically isolated communities require particular vigilance in service delivery because of the vulnerability of these populations. The Policy Issues subgroup focused on policies that would identify, in a timely manner, when County services might be underutilized by certain populations and when certain populations may be over represented in particular areas. Latinos are clearly disproportionately represented in certain areas of County services.

It is imperative that accurate data is made available in a timely manner on the services utilization and access of the Latino community. *County Stat* is currently used by various departments within Montgomery County government and can be a valuable tool for monitoring the work of the Latino Youth Collaborative as well as for planning for future service needs.

3.2 Policy Issues Recommendations (8 Recommendations)

Policy Issues Recommendation 1. Address the disproportionately high rates of academic ineligibility among Latino youth in Montgomery County Public Schools.

Action Steps:

1. Strengthen the implementation of the existing Board of Education Policy IQD provisions to ensure all schools are offering academic support to decrease student ineligibility for school sponsored activities that require academic eligibility.
2. Require earlier identification of Latino students at risk of becoming ineligible so that academic interventions can be offered to preempt and prevent ineligibility.
3. Mandate that time be set aside for homework or tutoring support before the beginning of any school-sponsored extracurricular activity. Universally adopt models, such as the Blair Sports Academy, where the activity sponsor requires students to spend some time doing their academic work or to seek academic help before the activity begins.
4. Develop a 4-year extracurricular activities plan alongside a student's academic plan. By requiring that they simultaneously complete a plan for extracurricular activities in which they wish to participate, students can become more aware of the eligibility requirements and better recognize the importance of connecting youth to extracurricular activities as a motivator for academic success.
5. Strengthen partnerships with community providers and County non-profits to expand the range of after-school activities not dependent on academic eligibility (as a part of Excel Beyond the Bell).
6. Develop a model of a K-12 after-school "extracurricular curriculum" that maps out a progression from Kindergarten through high school for simultaneous and complementary programming.
7. Continue to review academic eligibility data annually by individual middle and high school to identify school communities in need of additional or alternative support.
8. Utilize data collections from Excel Beyond the Bell to identify geographic areas most in need of youth programming.
9. Expand the use of an upfront data-collection infrastructure to study the effectiveness of existing programs in supporting school engagement and positive impact on academic performance.
10. Ensure that Positive Youth Development Initiative and Excel Beyond the Bell activities are consistent with or reflective of Latino Youth Collaborative policy recommendations and updated with changes as needed.

Entities Responsible: Collaboration Council, County Positive Youth Development Initiative, Department of Recreation, Montgomery County Public Schools.

Expected Outcomes: Increase in the rate of academic eligibility of Latino students. Latino youth will have greater access to effective academic support as well as increased opportunities to participate in extracurricular and other out-of-school time activities.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Data collection systems should report a demonstrable positive impact on students' academic performance at the end of the students' participation in out-of-school time programs.
2. Data for the 2009-2010 school year by individual middle and high school should identify school communities in need of additional support.

Policy Issues Recommendation 2. Change existing voluntary withdrawal practices in the Montgomery County Public School system.

Action Steps:

1. Continue to advocate for legislation to raise the compulsory age of school attendance in Maryland from 16 to 18 years with all attendant changes in resources.
2. Eliminate the use of "lack of interest" as a state-sanctioned basis for a student to voluntarily withdraw from Montgomery County Public Schools.
3. Mandate that the student is the agent with the authority to initiate the voluntary withdrawal process. A Montgomery County Public Schools administrator may only initiate voluntary withdrawal when, despite documented intervention efforts, a student refuses to attend school and the Community Superintendent has approved this action.
4. Formalize the Montgomery County Public Schools voluntary withdrawal process through a written regulation from Montgomery County Public Schools with the following requirements:
 - a. Rigorous training of administrators on the new regulation.
 - b. Implement specific record keeping including documentation of interventions made by the school to prevent voluntary withdrawal of students.
 - c. In-person meeting with students who initiate the withdrawal process, with the designated school administrators to discuss alternatives to withdrawal and to address any of the student's concerns that led to their decision to withdraw.
 - d. In-person meeting with students when the administration has initiated the withdrawal process, with the designated school administrators to discuss alternatives to withdrawal.
 - e. Informing students in writing that the meeting may include the school counselor, teacher, or other administrator, and the student's parent and/or guardian.
 - f. Informing students in writing that they have a right to an advocate of their choice and providing them with a list of advocates at the meeting.

Entities Responsible: Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland General Assembly, Maryland State Department of Education.

Expected Outcomes: Reduce the disproportionate rate of withdrawal of Latino youth from the school system.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Number of Latino youth who voluntarily withdraw from Montgomery County Public Schools in the 2010-2011 year and subsequent years.
2. Yearly evaluations of student withdrawal rates to determine whether there is a racial/ethnic disparity in withdrawal rates.
3. Annual review of voluntary withdrawal rates by school in the “Montgomery County Public Schools.”
4. Percentage of Latino youth who withdraw each school year as compared to entire body of students who withdraw.

Policy Issues Recommendation 3. Develop policies and implement strategies for increasing career/job-based education opportunities for Montgomery County Public Schools students.**Action Steps:**

1. Develop a central database of industry and business contacts willing to engage in internship and/or mentoring relationships with students.
2. Develop partnerships with community organizations such as the Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education and the various Chambers of Commerce to create a central resource of business and industry contacts available for internship or career/job-based mentoring opportunities.
3. Select Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education as the community organization to serve as the point of contact for businesses willing to offer internships and/or mentoring relationships to students.
4. Expand countywide career based course work options, such as those provided by the Thomas Edison School of Technology. Research and develop curriculum offerings that will meet the forecasted needs of all students in the 21st Century.
5. Reach out to the business community for career/job-based training involvement.
6. Expand career/job-based offerings to areas that have the option to culminate in certification or licensure.

Entities Responsible: Business community, Department of Economic Development, Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education, Workforce Investment Board.

Expected Outcomes: Increased engagement of Latino youth leading to college and career/job readiness.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Number and percentage of Latino students enrolled in career/job-based education opportunities.
2. Existence of a centralized internship database.

Policy Issues Recommendation 4. Advocate for the creation of an Adult High School to serve young adults who do not complete high school in the traditional manner.

Action Steps:

1. Hold the Adult High School in a separate facility, available early in the morning to late at night and on weekends.
2. Staff the Adult High School with a combination of current and retired teachers.
3. Allow students to register for a single course or multiple courses each semester.
4. Offer online education as an alternative for course completion.
5. Maintain affordable tuition and other costs.
6. Undertake an effective promotion campaign to ensure access by a wide audience.

Entities Responsible: Latino media, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, Universities of Shady Grove.

Expected Outcomes: Increased educational opportunities for students who work, with family obligations, and/or who have not benefited from the traditional high school experience, as well as immigrants who may have experienced interruptions in their formal education.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Enrollment figures at the Adult High School along with expected graduation rates.
2. Database of students receiving standard diplomas through this nontraditional avenue.

Policy Issues Recommendation 5. Oversee the County's use of the GangNET database and ensure it continues to demonstrate successful compliance with federal protection of privacy rights and collection of personal data.

Action Steps:

1. Montgomery County Police Department will convene with the Latin American Advisory Group and the Montgomery County Latino Public Safety Workgroup prior to making any major changes to the current database or should the Department ever decide to change to another gang database.

Entities Responsible: Central Gang Unit of the Montgomery County Police Department, Latin American Advisory Group, Montgomery County Latino Public Safety Work Group, Special Investigations Division of Montgomery County Police Department.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Increased transparency regarding use of the GangNet database.
2. Increased confidence in the police department's use of investigative information and their protection of individuals' privacy rights.
3. Improved public safety.

Indicators of Performance: Six-month federal audit demonstrating full compliance with all requirements for privacy and personal information protection.

Policy Issues Recommendation 6. Review Montgomery County Police Department's existing stop-and-frisk and field investigation/interrogation policies and request and analyze data related to the stopping, frisking and photographing of young Latino males.

Action Steps:

1. Request that the MCPD share information with the Latino Public Safety Workgroup on a quarterly basis regarding the results of data collected and analyzed regarding the “stop-and-frisk” policy.
2. Gather additional community feedback regarding “stop and frisk” activities building on the existing Identity “stop and frisk” data. Examples of this might include individual interviews, public hearings, and focus groups.
3. Analyze data received from police and community.
4. If necessary, develop specific recommendations to address findings from completed analysis.

Entities Responsible: Latino Public Safety Workgroup, Montgomery County Police Department

Expected Outcomes:

1. Improved police-Latino community relations.
2. Improved public safety.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Timeliness of receipt of initial documentation requested from MCPD.
2. Semi- annual account of field investigations/interrogations broken down by race/ethnicity/District
3. Measurable decrease in the number of inappropriate incidents.

Policy Issues Recommendation 7. Address issues related to contact with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by Montgomery County Police Department.

Action Steps:

1. Monitor the Violent Crimes and Weapons Violations arrest policy to ensure that the charges are consistent with the evidence for the crime that the individual was charged with to prevent abuses in the system. As a quality assurance measure, evaluate all circumstances under which people taken by ICE from the Montgomery County detention center to determine what triggered the call to ICE (violent crime, deportation warrant, Monday morning list, other).
2. Modify the current policy of notifying the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency by having correction officials handle notifications instead of County Police Officers thereby lessening the contact that officers have with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
3. Opt out of Secure Communities as allowable by federal policies.
4. Continue Montgomery County's policy of not actively participating in the Federal Government's 287g (section of immigration law allowing police to act for Immigration and Customs Enforcement).
5. Require annual in-service training for Montgomery County Police Department on how and when to implement the County policies of notifying Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Entities Responsible: County Executive, Montgomery County Police Department, Department of Corrections, Office of Community Partnerships

Expected Outcomes:

1. Reduced numbers of children and families separated due to deportations.
2. Reduced numbers of persons inappropriately reported to Immigration and Customs Enforcement contrary to the current County policy.

Indicators of Performance: Reduction in the number of deportations that are not accounted for through the established mechanisms for contacting ICE.

Policy Issues Recommendation 8. Identify whether existing County services are reaching Latino target populations and areas where the Latino community is disproportionately represented or negatively impacted.

Action Steps:

1. Identify in a timely fashion when County services may be underutilized by certain populations and/or when certain populations may be disproportionately represented. Include information from such efforts as the Collaboration Council's Disproportionate Minority Contact Reduction Initiative related to juvenile justice system.
2. Collect client service data segmented by race/ethnicity and preferred language in all key departments – MCPS, DHHS, MCPD.
3. Expand *County Stat* to add data points monitoring the Positive Youth Development Initiatives (i.e., the impact of these efforts on Latino youth).
4. Collect and provide public reports of Montgomery County Public Schools data on performance of Latino youth and include in the *County Stat* report.
5. Collect and provide reports of Montgomery County police data, broken down by ethnicity, regarding suspects in arrests as well as victims of crimes.
6. Invite the Superintendent, Board of Education, and Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove to participate in *County Stat* reviews that look at education outcomes for Montgomery County Latino youth.
7. Establish the Latino Youth Collaborative Oversight Commission and report regularly to the County Executive Latin American Advisory Group (e.g., data obtained in *County Stat* for specific performance measures).
8. Set up a system with *County Stat* to capture performance data of all recommendations in this Report.

Entities Responsible: *County Stat*, County Executive's Office, Chief Administrator's Office, Department of Health and Human Services, Latino Youth Oversight Commission, and Montgomery County Police Department.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Communities and areas of greatest need are better served and barriers to accessing services by Latino youth and families removed.
2. County government is more accountable to Latino community because of more transparent performance measures.
3. Implementation of a "managing for results" County government culture.
4. Improved County services for the Latino community.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Budget resources are allocated to ensure they are distributed to areas of greatest need.
2. Periodic reports for *County Stat* on Latino community service needs.



4.0 RESPONSIVE SERVICES SUBGROUP

4.1 Subgroup Members and Affiliations

Ana Lopez, Executive Director of Community Bridges, and Karla Silvestre, Latino Liaison for the Office of Community Partnerships, led the responsive services subgroup. Kathy Lally, former Executive Director of the Collaboration Council, served as co-chair for the first half of the year. Kate Garvey, Chief of Children, Youth and Families, served as liaison for the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee.

The membership of the group reflected key areas, including (in alphabetical order):

- Community Bridges
- Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families
- Department of Juvenile Services
- GUIDE Program, Inc.
- Interagency Coalition on Adolescent Pregnancy
- Latin American Advisory Group to the County Executive
- Mental Health Association of Montgomery County
- Montgomery College
- Montgomery County Adult English Literacy Coalition
- Montgomery County Council
- Montgomery County Department of Economic Development
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC
- Spanish Catholic Center
- Teen And Young Adult (TAYA) Health Connection

Process followed by the Responsive Services subgroup

The Responsive Services subgroup began its work by reviewing the indicators of child well being in the areas of educational development, violence prevention and overall wellbeing. They reviewed the data that indicated that Latino youth are not faring as well as their peers in the areas of: kindergarten readiness, graduation rates, dropout, absenteeism, and adolescent birth rate. They also reviewed some of the data from the Identity survey which indicated that the Latino youth who were surveyed did not have strong family or school connectedness and small percentages were involved in out-of-school-time activities and clubs. From there the subgroup went through a facilitated process to discuss the causes of the negative outcomes and potential solutions. The group reviewed national models and discussed local effective practices. The group utilized surveys and data reviews in order to gather appropriate data and to focus on the key issue areas and solutions.

The full subgroup met monthly at the Collaboration Council for Children Youth and Families and also at the Rockville Library. Three work groups were established to focus on the areas of educational development, violence prevention, and well-being. Revisions, edits, and feedback from subgroup members were solicited and provided via email and through ongoing meetings. Consensus and value voting were utilized to make decisions regarding priorities and recommendations.

4.1.a Core ideas

The subgroup focused at the very outset of the process to identify the barriers that affect Latino youth and families. These included socio-economic status, issues with public safety and frequently the absence of school and family connectedness. These significant challenges have led to negative outcomes for youth and increased the risk factors with which they have to contend. The work groups identified promising and best practices, both local and national, by reviewing models, literature reviews and sharing their own knowledge.

While a long list of approaches to address the problems and barriers affecting Latino youth was developed, it was necessary to focus on particular priority areas. The entire subgroup voted on the priorities for each area of concern. The subgroup felt that investment in these priorities would have the greatest return on investment. These priority areas were then used to create specific recommendations that would produce positive outcomes for youth. The three identified areas designated to address the issue of responsive services for the Latino community included:

1. Educational development: Increase out-of-school time programming for Latino youth.
2. Violence prevention: Assist Latino parents to build skills to develop protective factors for their children.
3. Enhancing wellbeing: Strengthening mental health services for Latino youth and their families, with special emphasis on increasing access and cultural competence.

Once the subgroup identified priority focus areas, the subgroup defined the desired state for responsive services in each of the areas. Each workgroup met to craft realistic recommendations that would help address the issues and barriers identified as causing problems for Latino youth. From those discussions, each solution was expanded upon to create the following vision for each focus area.

Educational Development

The workgroup felt strongly that an increase in out-of-school-time programs is needed to assist Latino youth to stay engaged and succeed in school. The group decided to focus on out-of-school time programming because of its flexibility to offer a wider range of culturally and linguistically appropriate positive youth development programming and the opportunities it provides to forge trusting relationships with caring adults--two critical aspects of high quality out-of-school time programs. The recommendations developed had a dual focus: the promotion of academic enrichment and positive youth development (which can lead to academic success).

The work group identified the need for significant increases in out-of-school time programs, however it was determined that due to financial constraints, this should be a long-term goal. The group instead focused its efforts more specifically on crafting recommendations that would test some pilot approaches and carry out necessary preliminary work for future investment. The use of the school as a community hub for youth, families, and community members emerged as a core idea. The groups saw the great need for local schools to serve the entire family and community. Another core idea was focusing out-of-school-time efforts in high priority geographic areas throughout the County. It was recognized that further assessment is needed to determine which areas are in greatest need of additional programs. Finally, the need for more meaningful programs for high-risk youth was identified. The needs of high risk youth require close attention as they are frequently the most

disconnected from school and any other institution. Any design work would have to include consideration for the needs of high risk youth and the many barriers that confront them and keep them from utilizing existing programs.

These key ideas generated by the education workgroup include those listed below. Some of these core ideas were integrated as action steps or recommendations while others were left out because they became less relevant or were not feasible.

1. Increasing out-of-school-time programming.

- Focus efforts in high-priority areas and address issues of accessibility (location of programs, time during the day that they are offered, and whether transportation is available).
- Provide programming (existing and new) that is designed and governed by youth and hence reflective of their interests.
- Provide programming (existing and new) that uses best practices (such as Excel Beyond the Bell standards, training, and planning) proven to work with Latino youth and demonstrate cultural and linguistic competence.
- Offer programs that provide credentialing and service learning opportunities for youth of various ages. Look at possibilities for providing paid or unpaid internships to high school youth and/or Student Service Learning hours in a model where older and younger youth are served in the same program thereby alleviating the demand for older youth to miss programs to care for younger siblings.

2. Develop the community schools model and strategy to anticipate new federal funding stemming from changes to the No Child Left Behind legislation. Use the school as a community hub where everyone can come for classes or other activities in a safe and convenient location.

The group also developed a list of additional ideas for solutions to problems facing Latino youth and families. They felt these ideas should also be considered in crafting the recommendations:

- Fund more Even Start programs where the child and parent are learning about literacy as well as Early Head Start programs. These programs would address the great need for Latino youth to be in an early learning environment so that they are ready for school when they enter kindergarten.
- Connect more children and families to mentoring opportunities. There is a need for guidance on how to navigate systems and thrive in Montgomery County.
- Help support the development of more Latino parent organizations that work to assist Latino children to succeed in school such as the current groups Padres y Alumnos Latinos en Acción (Latino Parents and Students in Action).
- Increase accountability of public sector personnel who work with Latino youth and families.
- Create more out-of-school programs that do not require academic eligibility because the Latino high risk population needs to connect with positive after school activities.

Violence Prevention

This workgroup focused its efforts on identifying strategies that have been proven to be effective in building capacity in the Latino community to safeguard against violence and other negative factors in the lives of Latino families. Parents were chosen as a point of intervention due to their role in providing guidance and support to their children in counteracting the negative issues they face on a daily basis. To do so, the group wanted to gain access to families, assess their needs, and connect them to resources accordingly. Hence, it was important to gain an understanding of the places Latino

families frequent to increase service providers' contact and interaction with them. Doing so would facilitate helping families assess their needs and respond effectively to them.

In addition, the workgroup hoped to build capacity by empowering Latino parents to take leadership roles within organizations and institutions from which their families receive services. Increasing parental leadership opportunities benefits both Latino parents and the organizations that serve them. For the parents, this process both deepens their learning and also gives them an opportunity to give back to their community. Organizations benefit in obtaining authentic feedback which ultimately increases the likelihood of programs being tailored to the needs of its participants. And where appropriate and possible, parental leadership components can help to build program sustainability as parents step into teaching/facilitation roles.

Lastly, the workgroup focused on mechanisms that the government entities could use to increase their effectiveness in getting information out to Latino parents. Studies have shown the positive impact that grassroots community lay worker models have in reaching segments of the Latino community that continue to be underserved. The health promoter model in particular has been praised for its success in outreaching to the Latino community.

These key ideas generated by the violence prevention workgroup include those listed below. Some of these core ideas were integrated as action steps or recommendations while others were left out because they became less relevant or were not feasible.

- I. Increasing community knowledge of risk and protective factors to help Latino parents understand the signs that often indicate that their child needs help and/or additional support while also increasing their understanding of steps they can take to protect their children from harm. Ways to do so include the following:
 - Identify and connect with key entry/contact points for families (Montgomery County Public Schools, English as a Second Language classes, churches, community service providers) where screenings and needs questionnaires can be completed to assist families in identifying areas of need. Follow-up is contingent on the capacity of each entity (e.g., a brochure can be created with referral information).
 - Add leadership and an empowerment component to existing parent and family programs providing parents the opportunity to grow their participation in the community, supporting programs by furthering impact, and helping to ensure sustainability of programs.
 - Use the community lay worker or health promoter approach for the dissemination of information, outreach and community education efforts from all government, school, and nonprofits to Latino parents and families.

The group also presented additional ideas for solutions to problems faced by Latino youth and families that they felt would have an impact on the current barriers. Some of these include:

- Help parents build skills to develop protective factors for youth through programs like Family Wellness.
- Increase the capacity of youth to respond to the violence in their schools through programs like the Safe Ambassadors Program (national violence prevention program)
- Incorporate Peer Mediation Programs to help youth mediate problems amongst their peers.

- Increase the prevalence of efforts like the Montgomery County Public School Kennedy Cluster Project that provides multidisciplinary community based service approaches within the school to support youth in their school environment.
- Provide opportunities for parents and students to participate and address their concerns through peer- and parent-led efforts;
- Increase the cultural competency of all staff through training on race/ethnic relations and conflict resolution.

Enhance Well-being

This workgroup selected the delivery of mental health services as the critical approach for enhancing the wellbeing of Latino youth and families. A brief survey was done with community based and private providers to determine the availability of culturally and linguistically competent services, which are two of the foundational issues related to this service delivery. Although some agencies reported having long waiting lists, the survey results indicated that there were multiple organizations offering mental health services to Latino residents. Further analysis is needed to determine the true capacity versus demand and/or other barriers for the Latino community to access mental health services. The survey results illustrated the importance of assuring that the existing gateways to services are fully operational and responsive to the needs of families. It was agreed that services should span prevention, early intervention, intensive intervention, treatment, and after care and that both clinical and natural supports should be available.

Key ideas generated by the Enhancing Wellbeing workgroup include those listed below. Some of these core ideas were integrated as action steps or recommendations while others were left out because they became less relevant or were not feasible.

1. Adopt and/or create standards for mental health services addressing:
 - Accessibility (location, hours, transportation) of services
 - Language capability of all staff in contact with clients
 - Cultural competence and appropriate staffing
 - Accountability
2. Increase awareness of and improve utilization of mental health services:
 - Assess the capacity of the ACCESS team to fully link County residents, particularly Latino residents, to services. If necessary, increase the size and scope of the ACCESS team to make appropriate links to services and follow up on referrals (case management). Explore alternative structures if it appears that ACCESS is not the appropriate mechanism.
 - Explore greater connections among ACCESS, infoMONTGOMERY and MC311. Track requests and identify service gaps or capacity issues. Include all information of possible services. Explore expanding data fields within infoMONTGOMERY to increase the specificity of the information to assist in service searches.
 - Assist non-profits and public programs to be aware of mental health services and methods to link to them.
 - Increase linkages with all key access points (Local Access Mechanism, Primary Care, Behavioral Health Pilot/Washington Psychiatric Society)

3. Increase support for the Latino Health Initiative Foreign Trained Health Professionals (now called the Welcome Back Center) to increase the number of mental health therapists in the County. Low-cost and -intensity programs can be designed to educate the community about the credentialing process.
4. Increase efforts to assist residents in building and strengthening their natural support networks and connections.

4.1.b Current situation in Montgomery County

On August 26, 2009, the newly seated Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee was presented with background information and data that demonstrated the tremendous pressures and dire circumstances facing some Latino youth and their families in Montgomery County. The group received an overview of the history of war, violence, and extreme poverty in many of the Central American countries where many youth previously have lived. The impact of family separation, incomplete education, and victimization can clearly be seen in the lives of youth today.

In 2009:

- ❖ **Births to Latina teens 15-17 years old increased by 18% and births to 18-19 year olds increased by 79% in the past decade, while the rates for whites and Black/African Americans have declined.**
- ❖ **36% of the persons referred to the Abused Persons Program were identified as Latino.**
- ❖ **19% of the children in out of home placement are Latino; of those 49% have been removed due to neglect**

Additional information was shared from a needs assessment completed by Identity, Inc. with more than 1,000 youth from across Montgomery County. This information made clear that many youth face violence (42% reported being in physical fights in the previous year); do not feel safe (38%); and lack adequate supervision from parents/adults (48% lack supervision after school and 20% on weekends).

Current data indicate that Latino youth have high rates of truancy, expulsions, dropouts, and adolescent pregnancy, and low rates of school readiness and graduation. This shows many Latino youth are in jeopardy and that effective solutions are required to assure their wellbeing. While there are services and supports available to youth and their families, these are not meeting the needs of all youth.

4.2 Responsive Services Recommendations

This section outlines 12 priority recommendations as crafted by the Responsive Services subgroup.

Responsive Services Recommendation 1. Assist the school system in addressing the complex needs of youth by expanding effective, high quality, and evidence-based out-of-school-time programs that are accessible and culturally competent for Latino youth and respond to specific needs of youth.

Action Steps:

1. Update the inventory of out-of-school-time programs completed through Excel Beyond the Bell and analyze the data with respect to type, quality, and availability of services.
2. Identify gaps in the quality of programs and in their distribution in priority geographic areas (high poverty) and work together with key partners to establish additional programming based on findings.
3. Create or modify programs in the same facility that offer programming for youth of different ages either as independent programs and/or inter-age programs. These programs respond to the need for siblings in families to have age-appropriate opportunities since many older youth have to supervise younger siblings and cannot engage in out-of-school-time activities themselves.
4. Seek updates from County Council's Taskforce on Mentoring to learn which programs offer multi-age programming.
5. Set up clubs and programs run by schools, community-based organizations, or the Recreation Department in a key elementary school that offers high school youth Student Service Learning hours, stipends, or other credentials for serving as after-school teacher assistants in clubs and mentoring. Vet this model with Montgomery County Public Schools Community Superintendents; pilot a program to test this recommendation and pilot additional models to meet the needs of Latino youth.
6. Create sufficient high quality professional development opportunities that strengthen skills for non-profit youth workers working in out-of-school-time programs with Latino youth.
 - Assess current trainers and trainings to determine whether they are of high quality and address the needs of current programs.
 - Explore the creation and/or expansion of a youth development worker career/job path.

Entities Responsible: Collaboration Council's Excel Beyond the Bell, Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools Community Superintendents, Montgomery County Public Schools Office of Student Service Learning, Recreation Department.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Increased school engagement by youth of multiple ages.
2. Increased academic achievement and attendance.
3. Improved interpersonal relations with school staff.
4. Geographical areas are identified where more programs are needed; additional services are available for youth.
5. Increased number of well trained staff and of staff retention.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Increased older youth getting Student Service Learning (SSL) hours and/or credit for participation.
2. After-school supervision for elementary school youth.
3. Increased participation in after-school activities by all youth (older and younger).
4. Measures of positive youth development (leadership skills, self direction, social skills, team building, self-esteem).
5. Report that includes findings of research; the number and quality of programs have increased.
6. Increased number of youth workers participating in trainings.
7. Reduction of turnover rates of youth workers.

Responsive Services Recommendation 2. Utilize schools as neighborhood-based hubs that provide comprehensive services and education opportunities in a safe environment for all community members.**Action Steps:**

1. Define and explore models including Linkages to Learning schools as potential partners.
2. Provide grant writing support to continue to explore federal funding opportunities.
3. Adopt a model and target key schools with a high concentration of Latino students.
4. Negotiate on alternative uses of school buildings with Interagency Coordinating Board, Montgomery County Public Schools, and/or County government.
5. Identify and implement pilot start-ups at key schools.
6. Link with existing services within the schools such as school-based health centers, Linkages to Learning, and community-based programming.
7. Plan for future school construction to accommodate community school hubs.

Entities Responsible: Interagency Coordinating Board, Chief Administrative Officer, Board of Education, Montgomery County Public Schools, non-profit partners, participating County departments.

Expected Outcomes: Increased community participation and parent involvement to support student learning and positive youth development and to build strong families.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Increased use of services.
2. Positive youth outcomes.
3. Increased parent participation.
4. Increased inter-generational relationship building.
5. Safe and healthy communities.

Responsive Services Recommendation 3: Increase the number and quality of Student Service Learning (SSL) opportunities for Latino youth.

Action Steps:

1. Engage Student Service Learning office and programs/agencies to offer the best possible experience for each youth that matches their skills, abilities, and knowledge.
2. Expand Student Service Learning office's current offerings to include culturally and linguistically competent placements.

Entities Responsible: Montgomery County Public Schools Student Service Learning office, non-profit Montgomery, community based organizations.

Expected Outcomes:

1. All youth are placed and have completed required Student Service Learning hours for graduation.
2. Increased number of culturally and linguistically appropriate placements.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Number of additional internships or Student Service Learning opportunities.
2. Increased placements by 25% per year.

Responsive Services Recommendation 4. Develop programs and implement strategies to support Latino youth who are no longer in school. This would include increasing career/job-based education and training.

Action Steps:

1. Develop a central database of industry and business contacts willing to engage in internship and/or mentoring relationships with youth.
2. Develop partnerships with community organizations such as the Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education, Workforce Investment Board, and the various Chambers of Commerce to create a central resource of business and industry contacts available for internship or career/job-based mentoring opportunities.
3. Work with a consortium of organizations that can connect to in-school and out-of-school youth such as the Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Montgomery County's vendor for providing workforce services for youth to serve as the point of contact for businesses willing to offer internships and/or mentoring relationships to youth.
4. Reach out to the business community for career/job-based training involvement.
5. Expand career/job-based offerings to areas that have the option to culminate in certification or licensure.

Entities Responsible: Business community, Department of Economic Development, Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education, Workforce Investment Board.

Expected Outcomes: Increased engagement of Latino youth to ensure college and career/job readiness and employment.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Number and percentage of Latino students enrolled in career/job-based education opportunities.
2. Existence of a centralized internship database.
3. Number of out of school youth employed.

Responsive Services Recommendation 5. Identify and enhance the capability of key contact/entry points in Montgomery County to connect with Latino families and assess their needs.**Action Steps:**

1. Compile a comprehensive list of specific entry points that connect with a large number of Latino families.
2. Administer a survey to determine which assessment tools are currently utilized by entry points (existing questionnaires, assessments).
3. Create culturally competent, family-friendly questions geared toward the Latino community that can be quickly utilized to determine need.
4. Build upon infoMONTGOMERY to create a Latino page geared specifically to the needs of Latino community.
5. Conduct outreach to traditional and non-traditional entry points to demonstrate the benefits of utilizing infoMONTGOMERY and other resource tools to better serve their participants.
6. Educate non-traditional entry points (e.g., churches) to connect and utilize infoMONTGOMERY and other resource tools as a referral source.
7. Conduct focus groups with entry points about gaps and assistance needed.
8. Request funders and policymakers (e.g., Department Directors, Council members, Maryland County Public Schools Board of Education and Administration) to require service providers to utilize and update information on infoMONTGOMERY on at least a yearly basis as part of their contracts.

Entities Responsible: Latino Youth Collaborative Oversight Commission, Health and Human Services, Collaboration Council, Montgomery County Public Schools Department of Family and Community Partnerships, Office of Community Partnerships.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Improved levels of support by groups in many sectors.
2. Increased rate of averting crises by families across the County.
3. Increased knowledge of earlier points of engagement into the Latino community.
4. InfoMONTGOMERY will be more user-friendly so that all-service providers can quickly access resources for the Latino community.
5. Nontraditional entry points better equipped to respond to community needs.
6. Statement in Request for Proposals (RFPs) and contract renewals for all County-funded programming.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Accurate point-in-time snapshot of all entry points.
2. Completed list of entry points.
3. Survey results disseminated to the steering committee.

4. Completed questions that can easily be integrated into a survey (survey items will have been tested such as in focus groups at Linkages to Learning).
5. Latino page created within infoMONTGOMERY.
6. Consistent language on best practices for engaging the Latino community around their needs. Creation and implementation of training/outreach to various entry points (feedback will be utilized to refine training plan).
7. All information in infoMONTGOMERY more comprehensive and up-to-date.

Responsive Services Recommendation 6. Add leadership and empowerment components for parents to existing youth and family programs (unless this compromises youth participation) in order to increase parental participation in these programs as well as to ensure programs are meeting the needs of participants.

Action Steps:

1. Gather best practices for increasing Latino parental involvement from surveys, focus groups, and/or literature reviews.
2. Disseminate findings to existing family and youth providers.
3. Encourage providers to follow these strategies:
 - a. Ensure parents are involved in decision-making related to programming (via easy ability to participate in advisory groups or committees).
 - b. Add parent component to existing youth programs.
 - c. Enhance parent-peer opportunities for networking.
4. Request funders and policymakers fund a Latino parental involvement component based on best practices

Entities Responsible: Collaboration Council, funders and policymakers, Health and Human Services, Latino Health Initiative, Latino networks, Latino Youth Collaborative Oversight Commission, non-profit partners.

Expected Outcomes: Increased parental participation and leadership in programs serving youth.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Best practices identified and documented in a written report.
2. More programs utilizing Latino parental involvement best practices.
3. Funders and policymakers including language in policy development, funding, and funding qualifications that assure increased utilization of parental involvement best practices.

Responsive Services Recommendation 7. Enhance the utilization of community lay workers (promotoras) as a key culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and public education approach among government, school, and nonprofits working with Latino parents and families.

Action Steps:

1. Educate funders and policymakers regarding the value of the model to create policy requiring government entities to utilize approaches in outreaching to the Latino community (Department Directors, Council members, Montgomery County Public Schools Board of Education and Administration).

2. Train and educate service providers about ways to utilize the model to disseminate information to the Latino community (nonprofits, community clinics, government programs).
3. Increase the number of *promotoras* working with Latino community members.

Entities Responsible: Latino Health Initiative, Latino Youth Collaborative Oversight Commission, service providers (government and non-profit).

Expected Outcomes: Approach will be utilized throughout County agencies serving the Latino community.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Funders and policymakers include language in policy development and funding qualifications that assure increased utilization of the model.
2. Increased number of *promotoras* throughout the community.
3. Increased leadership among the Latino community in other groups like program advisory groups, PTAs, and commissions.
4. Data on number of people recruited, trained, and currently working continuously tracked.

Responsive Services Recommendation 8. Adopt standards for mental health services that ensure all mental health service providers that receive County funding provide services that are accessible, reflect cultural and linguistic competence, and demonstrate accountability.

Action Steps:

1. Assess current locations accessibility where mental health services are being delivered.
2. Ensure customer service tools are being used in programs to determine level of satisfaction and gaps in service. (Review current Health and Human Services customer services surveys)
3. Pursue countywide approaches in the area of training and support to strengthen cultural competence and accountability for public and private programs.
4. Explore the viability of a single database to be used by providers that would enable improved tracking of services and identification of trends. Include information on completion of services and number of weeks the client completed.
5. Explore a collaborative rate for the Language Line, tied to the County contract.
 - a. As organizations work to become more linguistically competent, the Language Line can be used (however, the Language Line should not be used for mental health therapy).

Entities Responsible: Health and Human Services Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Collaboration Council, funders, , Mental Health providers, Office of Community Partnerships, Montgomery County Public Schools.

Expected Outcomes: Mental health needs are identified earlier and met in a culturally competent manner.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Increased utilization of services by Latino youth and their families.
2. Improved satisfaction reported through customer service surveys.

3. Increased language capability by mental health organizations.
4. Improved accessibility by mental health organizations.
5. Accessibility would be demonstrated by having services that are no more than a mile from the Metro subway or bus, no more than one transfer, and are offered during evening hours and/or on weekends.
6. Language capability would be demonstrated if response to the client in their language occurs within 24 hours (Language line is acceptable for use for navigating services, but not appropriate for the actual delivery of services) and mental health services are provided in Spanish.
7. Key positions (receptionists/first line of contact, therapists) have language capability and/or methods to assure clients have access to appropriate persons who speak their language.
8. Customers are encouraged to complete bilingual customer service surveys that are in a visible place and used to improve practices. Survey results should be tabulated and reported to County funders on a regular basis. County government providers should report the results to *County Stat*.

Responsive Services Recommendation 9. Increase awareness and improve utilization of mental health services among Latino community members.

Action Steps:

1. Develop an on-going public education campaign to dispel myths and stereotypes about mental health in the Latino community.
2. Assess the capacity of the Health and Human Services Behavioral Health ACCESS team (the County's behavioral health referral mechanism) to fully link County Latino residents to services.
3. If necessary, increase the size and scope of the ACCESS team to make appropriate links to services and follow-up on referrals (case management) as necessary.
4. Explore an alternative referral approach if ACCESS does not have the capacity to serve Latino youth and their families effectively.
5. Explore expanding data fields within infoMONTGOMERY to increase the specificity of the information (to make it easier for families and providers to identify and link to appropriate mental health services).
6. Explore greater connections among ACCESS, infoMONTGOMERY and MC311. Attempt to track requests and identify service gaps or capacity issues. Include information on all possible services.
7. Increase linkages among key access points to increase and improve access and utilization (Primary Care, Behavioral Health Pilot/Washington Psychiatric Society).
8. Use community lay workers (health promoter) model to increase awareness and improve utilization among Latino community members.

Entities Responsible: Area providers, Behavioral Health and Crisis Services, Collaboration Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Latino Youth Collaborative Oversight Commission, MC311, nonprofit partners, Oversight Commission, Public Information Office.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Improved information sharing and access for individuals and families.
2. Increase utilization of mental health services by Latinos in the County.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Determination is made on viability of ACCESS as key referral mechanism for the Latino community.
2. Plan is developed to increase service linkages and follow-up.
3. Tracking and coordination approaches are established among collaborating entities.
4. Latino families and providers are more able to navigate infoMONTGOMERY for mental health services.
5. Access points are contacted and provided with information and methods to make referrals.

Responsive Services Recommendation 10. Increase support for the Latino Health Initiative Foreign Trained Health Professionals initiative to increase the number of bilingual mental health therapists in the County.**Action Steps:**

1. Convene with Latino Health Initiative representatives to discuss current plan and determine any need for additional support and funding to implement the expansion of mental health therapists.
2. Establish an action plan that may include work with universities, licensing boards for mental health professionals, and area agencies to create the education, support, and employment system necessary.

Entities Responsible: County Department of Health and Human Services, Latino Health Initiative.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Increased access to culturally and linguistically competent mental health professionals.
2. Reduced waiting lists for bilingual mental health services.

Indicators of Performance: Increased number of newly hired bilingual mental health providers.

Responsive Services Recommendation 11. Increase efforts to assist Latino families to build and strengthen their natural support networks resulting in a more cooperative and resilient community. Build upon neighborhood-based support networks that offer meaningful supports and connections.**Action Steps:**

1. Explore the possibilities with Montgomery County Public Schools to include a component for building support networks in outreach efforts through the Office of Family and Community Partnerships.
2. Look at key access points (formal and informal) for opportunities to gather residents together so they can receive information and, more importantly, connect with their neighbors.
3. Explore Neighborhood Opportunity Network approach for possible expansion.
4. Expand *promotoras* (lay community workers) model.

Entities Responsible: Department of Family and Community Partnerships, Department of Health and Human Services, faith communities, Montgomery County Public Schools, non-profit partners.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Increased social and emotional investment in the community.
2. Enhanced connection between individuals and the community.
3. Enhanced ability of residents to identify and engage natural supports.
4. Prevention of mental health issues related to isolation and lack of supports.
5. Reduced demand for formal mental health interventions.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Increased awareness in general population of existing efforts and services to create support networks.
2. Increased numbers of organizations at key access points that are aware of services to create support networks.
3. Increased numbers of services available to facilitate support networks.



5.0 SOCIAL INTEGRATION SUBGROUP

5.1 Subgroup members and affiliations

Invitations to participate in the Social Integration subgroup were extended to specific members of the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee as well as those outside the Steering Committee to assure diverse public and private representation in the areas of public safety, health and social services, and education. At the first meeting, participants were encouraged to put forth names of other potential subgroup members whose areas of expertise might have been missing from the group. Based on feedback, additional individuals were invited to participate in the subgroup.

Wayne Jerman, Assistant Chief, Montgomery County Police Department, and Luisa Montero, Latin American Youth Center/Maryland Multicultural Youth Centers, served as co-chairs with Karla Silvestre, Montgomery County Executive's Office of Community Partnerships, and Diego Uriburu, Identity, Inc., served as liaisons for the Steering Committee. The following lists the organizations represented on the Social Integration subgroup (in alphabetical order):

- CASA de Maryland
- Councilmember Marc Elrich's office
- Eastern Montgomery County Regional Service Center
- First Focus
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Identity, Inc.
- Impact Silver Spring
- Interfaith Works
- Maryland Multicultural Youth Center
- Montgomery County Department of Corrections
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Montgomery County Board of Education
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Silver Spring Regional Center

Process followed by Social Integration subgroup

The full subgroup met monthly with additional meetings and teleconferences as needed. Co-chairs met in person or via telephone separately as needed. In addition, revisions, edits, and feedback from Social Integration subgroup members were solicited and provided via email. Monthly meetings were scheduled the first Monday of the month and held at the County Executive Building in Rockville, Maryland, and typically lasted two to three hours. Smaller work meetings were held at various locations between monthly meetings. Agendas were developed and distributed prior to each meeting as were the minutes from prior meetings.

5.1.a Core ideas

During the first meeting, Social Integration subgroup members went through a facilitated process of clarifying what “social integration” means. Members reviewed social integration models deemed successful in other parts of the country and one in Canada. As a result, members agreed on three concepts to guide its work throughout the year:

1. Youth should have a “road map” with which they are familiar and comfortable and can use it to navigate the County.
2. Institutions and service delivery systems in the County can engage youth in a way that is user-friendly and makes them feel welcomed.
3. The community in its entirety can be inclusive (a transformation at the community and media level from negative perspectives and messages about Latinos to positive ones can happen).

As a result of discussion and input from the Steering Committee, the Social Integration subgroup decided to work within an alternative framework than initially presented by the Steering Committee to the three subgroups. At the first two meetings, discussion centered around the framework initially presented which included a focus on the area of educational development, violence prevention, wellbeing. However, fitting social integration needs and factors into this framework proved confusing. The Social Integration subgroup members felt the following framework better reflected the social integration context: general community, government, education, and Latino community. These four broad areas, in the view of subgroup participants encompassed most entities and environments where Latino youth and families would either feel welcomed and included or not. Thus, recommendations were developed to address social integration through these four lenses.

The Social Integration subgroup reviewed the compiled examples of social integration initiatives from other jurisdictions to inform its initial conversations. The subgroup agreed on the importance of input from Latino youth and community members in these deliberations. Therefore, focus groups were held using a standard and agreed-upon focus group protocol. Members from the group facilitated these sessions with Latino youth and adults. The subgroup collected additional input from an online survey.

The four workgroups met, developed, and presented draft recommendations to the full subgroup and then incorporated the edits and suggestions to develop a final version including action steps, responsible parties, and timelines. All of this was presented to the Steering Committee as well. Representatives from the Social Integration subgroup again revised the recommendations taking into account all input and added information requested by the steering committee. Input and edits were also solicited via email. Recommendations were further refined based on input from members of the Steering Committee at its 2010 June meeting.

5.1.b Current situation in Montgomery County

The formation of the Latino Youth Collaborative was based on data relevant to the current crises affecting Latino youth in Montgomery County. The work of the Social Integration subgroup was guided by that data presented at the Steering Committee level and additional data presented within the subgroup itself. The goal of the Social Integration subgroup, as articulated in the initial Steering Committee meeting and the County Executive's charge, was to look at ways to ensure that Latino youth and their families are valued and welcomed as members of the County. The subgroup's purpose was to explore relationships of Latino youth and their families with various segments of the County while considering how the social integration of Latino youth and their families could be enhanced.

As a result of its focused ideas, the Social Integration subgroup expected to identify specific actions that would be taken by Montgomery County Government, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery County Latino community members that would result in the whole of the Latino community becoming more integrated into the County's social, economic, and education fabric. These actions will result in a Latino community that is:

- a) Welcomed, respected, and appreciated by the County's general population.
- b) Treated in a culturally and linguistically competent manner by all County government agencies.
- c) Seen as important in the eyes of the agencies that serve them.
- d) Involved in decision-making processes.
- e) Taking opportunities for integration by graduating from high school and from 2-4 year colleges and universities.
- f) Holding the government and school system accountable
- g) More proactive in taking needed steps to fully integrate itself in the Montgomery County community.

- **The Latino population in Montgomery County is the fastest growing ethnic group in the County, with a 29% increase since 2000.**
- **In 2007, an estimated 133,387 Latinos lived in Montgomery County, making Latinos the second largest minority in the County (second to African Americans) at 13.9% and representing the largest concentration of Latinos in Maryland (38%).**
- **Latinos in Montgomery County are younger (29.3 years, median) than the overall County's population (38.3 years, median).**
- **Nearly one third (31.5%) of Latinos are under 18 years of age and 63.5% are working age adults between the ages of 18 and 65**
- **In Montgomery County, 65% of Latinos are foreign-born and 35% native-born. This contrasts with national figures reporting Latinos are 60% native-born and 40% foreign-born.**
- **Latinos have the lowest per capita income in Montgomery County: \$20,165**

5.2 Social Integration Recommendations

This section outlines nine priority recommendations as crafted by the Social Integration subgroup.

Social Integration Recommendation 1. Launch an ongoing public relations and communications campaign by County government that promotes Latino youth and their families as valuable, hard-working members of our community.

Action Steps:

1. The ongoing campaign will develop strategies to remind residents of the Latino community's valuable contributions to the County on an ongoing basis.
2. The campaign will include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Editorial board meetings with local print, radio, television, and online media to discuss Latino youth and family issues, achievements, contributions, and culture with the goal of enhancing cultural sensitivity.
 - b. Regular outreach to editors and reporters via press releases and press kits about the importance of mentoring and Latino achievements.
 - c. Strategic placement of letters to the editor.
 - d. Sustained outreach through a speaker's bureau to Latino faith and non-profit organizations to connect them with the wider County community.
 - e. An annual Latino Achievement Award Program (youth, business, community).
 - f. Pledges from elected officials to support the recommendations of the Latino Youth Collaborative.

Entities Responsible: The County Executive's Public Information Office, Oversight Commission of the Latino Youth Collaborative, community stakeholders (businesses, community and faith-based organizations, civic organizations, sports leagues).

Expected Outcomes: Latino youth in the County are proud of their heritage because positive aspects of their culture are reflected in the community.

Indicators of Performance:

1. The improvement of the Latino community's perspective of their successes with social integration and the general community's attitude toward Latinos, as measured by surveys.
2. Increased number of news stories and editorials with positive and/or negative slants on Latinos.

Social Integration Recommendation 2. Improve the cultural and linguistic competence of each County department.

Action Steps:

1. Each County department will develop a cultural competency plan (including training) and implement culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies. At a minimum plans should:
 - a. Provide basic training on immigration procedures and related issues for all County departments' top managers.
 - b. Ensure input from the Latino community during the plan's development and implementation.

- c. Ensure that bilingual/bicultural staff are available at different locations to better serve the Latino community.
- d. Establish clearly articulated and straightforward mechanisms for reporting compliments and complaints about County employees related to service delivery incidents or acts.
- e. Establish and publicize Welcome Centers in partnership with non-profit organizations where Latino community members can get assistance on numerous integration issues.
- f. Ensure that County Agency and County government leadership teams explicitly communicate to the larger community their commitment to inclusion and integration (statements in marketing materials, mission statement, websites, and orientation of new employees).
- g. Provide awareness training regarding rights and responsibilities of residents of the County.
- h. Provide assistance on how to best navigate the legal process and safety net services they can access to family members whose loved ones are being deported. Track data for a better understanding of how this affects the Latino community.
- i. Provide annual reports to the community regarding the County departments' progress and compliance with the Executive Order for Limited English Proficiency, the recommendations set forth in the report "Achieving An Inclusive County Workforce for Responsive County Service Delivery," and other relevant reports on past initiatives.
- j. Explore how *County Stat* can be used more effectively to capture Latino end-users' satisfaction.
- k. The County Executive's Office should develop universal cultural competency standards that each agency will adapt and operationalize for their particular situations.

For the Montgomery County Police Department's cultural competency plan:

- a. Ensure that the Latino community is part of decision-making processes related to immigration policies and is notified of any changes in the County's policies on notifications to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
- b. Continue Spanish radio outreach by Montgomery County Police Department media services.

Entities Responsible: Individual County departments, Office of the County Executive.

Expected Outcomes: County Services that are welcoming, accessible, and run by highly qualified, culturally competent staff.

Indicators of Performance: Cultural competency self-assessments are completed; satisfaction surveys reflect increases in customer satisfaction; departments implementing cultural competency plans; Welcome Center strategic planning process completed.

Social Integration Recommendation 3. Establish a Latino ombudsman in the Office of the County Executive to assure accountability of equitable treatment of Latinos in all areas of government services.

Action Steps:

1. The County Executive will create the ombudsman position and allocate appropriate funding.
 - a. Job duties and authority are developed and selection is accomplished with community participation and input.

Entities Responsible: County Office of Human Resources, Office of the County Executive (reporting directly to the County Executive).

Expected Outcomes:

1. Fair, equitable treatment of Latino residents.
2. Improved trust and relationships between government and the community.
3. County agencies will be more accountable to the Latino community.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Resources allocated for ombudsman function.
 - o Eventual decrease in clients who visit the ombudsman.
2. Issues brought to the ombudsman successfully resolved 80% of the time.
3. Latino community-specific satisfaction survey every 3 years to gauge satisfaction with County services.

Social Integration Recommendation 4. Strengthen the accountability to and equitable treatment of the Latino community by Montgomery County Public Schools by funding independent public/private entities to fill advocacy gaps for Latino parents.

Action Steps:

1. Identify and document successful replicable models of independent advocacy functions in other school systems.
2. Identify which private partners may fulfill this function in the County.
3. Identify the most pressing advocacy needs.
4. Develop, initiate, and fund a plan for implementation of partnerships with Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) as a possible mechanism.
5. Explore opportunities for independent entities to partner with existing mechanisms for accountability (Board of Education ombudsman and Department of Family and Community Partnerships).

Entities Responsible: Board of Education, County Council Education Committee, Montgomery County Public Schools Administration.

Expected Outcomes: Latino parents and students' needs are met.

Indicators of Performance: Completion of plan and partnerships with nonprofit are in place.

Social Integration Recommendation 5. County Boards, Committees and Commissions will develop and include in their respective action plans strategies that are responsive to the needs of the Latino community. In addition ensure that there is Latino representation on boards with particular focus on the following: 1) Children and Youth, 2) Juvenile Justice, 3) Health, 4) Five Regional Centers' Citizen Advisory Boards.

Action Steps:

1. Undertake a study of important issues affecting the Latino community as they pertain to their area of concentration. (Commissions)
2. Develop recommendations and action steps to respond to these issues. (Commissions)
3. Develop and implement action plans to enhance participation by Latino youth. (Regional Service Centers)
4. Ensure Latinos are recruited and serve on all commissions.

Entities Responsible: Chairs of Boards, Chiefs of respective Service Areas, committees, commissions, Office of the County Executive, Regional Service Center Directors.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased agenda items and discussion pertaining to Latino issues.
- Increased representation of Latinos on boards, committees, and commissions.

Indicators of Performance:

1. The above-mentioned commissions integrate goals and objectives that specifically address the needs of the Latino community and develop action steps to achieve goals.
2. Commissions report progress on Latino-specific goals at annual meetings with the County Executive.
3. Increased number of Latinos serving as members on identified Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

Social Integration Recommendation 6. Build on Montgomery County Public School System's efforts to empower Latino parents to better understand and integrate into the school system to enable them to advocate effectively for their children's education.

Action Steps:

1. Build upon the capacity of the current MCPS Parent Academy program and parent resource staff to help Latino parents navigate the system.
2. Improve the quality and quantity of culturally and linguistically competent outreach efforts targeting Latino parents with the aim of providing them with the information and skills needed to become better equipped to support their children's education, starting with schools with high concentrations of Latino students (25% or higher) and then expanding to the whole system.
3. Continue and expand use of Connect Ed at all schools to relay important messages to Spanish-speaking parents.
4. Expand initiatives that focus on providing more English as a Second Language and literacy classes for family members.

Entities Responsible: Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy, Montgomery County Public Schools Administration, Board of Education.

Expected Outcomes: Latino parents are integral to and integrated into the school community. They feel welcomed and included and play an active role in the life of the school.

Indicators of Performance: Latino parents report satisfaction via specific satisfaction surveys every year to gauge satisfaction with school services and communication.

Social Integration Recommendation 7. Increase responsiveness, accountability, and respect towards Latino families by school staff and administration resulting in their high expectations for Latino families. This includes providing them with all the necessary support and equitable treatment for ensuring Latino students' success.

Action Steps:

1. Offer and encourage continuing education courses or other classes for teachers and administrators related to the socio-political history of Latino immigrants' countries of origin or regions of Latin America. Use a methodology that is interactive.
2. Review models to improve relations between Latino families and school staff that have been shown to work, locally and/or nationally.
3. Establish a clearly articulated and straightforward mechanism for reporting compliments and complaints about school employees related to incidents or acts involving service delivery.
4. Ensure that School Environment/Climate surveys administered by the school system report findings disaggregating Latino responses.

Entities Responsible: Board of Education, Montgomery County Public Schools Administration, Latino parents, and non-profit advocacy agencies.

Expected Outcomes: Montgomery County Public Schools staff, particularly at the school level, have increased understanding of the immigrant experience and the Latino culture and are better prepared to address issues.

Indicators of Performance:

1. Increase in satisfaction levels of Latino parents measured by specific satisfaction surveys every year.
2. Increased understanding of staff measured by surveys of staff that gauge their understanding of Latino culture, experience, and issues.

Social Integration Recommendation 8. Increase Latino graduation rates at Montgomery College and other universities, including the Universities at Shady Grove and the University of Maryland.

Action Steps:

1. Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, Universities at Shady Grove and the University of Maryland should increase their efforts to educate Latino parents about the benefits of their children attending college. To be effective, this initiative must

2. Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, Universities at Shady Grove and the University of Maryland will collaborate to effectively inform prospective Latino students about opportunities available at these institutions. A special Montgomery County Public Schools counseling initiative linked to Montgomery College and Universities at Shady Grove should be initiated to support college-bound Latino students.
3. Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, Universities at Shady Grove and the University of Maryland must strive to orient and educate Latino students about how to successfully transition from high school to higher education. To ease this transition, additional counseling services and support to students must be provided (e.g., college financial aid information, scholarship information, mentoring, and internship opportunities).
4. The higher education partners of Montgomery County Public Schools must provide culturally and linguistically competent social and academic support to Latino students who enroll in Montgomery College and Universities at Shady Grove.
5. Montgomery College should continue its commitment to the education of all Latino residents in the County.

Entities Responsible: Board of Education, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools Administration, Universities at Shady Grove, University of Maryland.

Expected Outcomes: Latino students enroll in greater numbers than in 2010 at these institutions of higher learning and graduation rates increase annually over the next eight years.

Indicators of Performance: Increase in enrollment and graduation numbers of Latino students over the next eight years.

Social Integration Recommendation 9. Provide Latino youth and families with the necessary tools, knowledge, and access in order to strengthen their civic engagement capabilities.

Action Steps:

1. Empower the County's Latino community members to become more actively involved in political processes by:
 - a. Developing and delivering education sessions on rights and responsibilities and how to engage in political processes.
 - b. Encouraging and assisting Latinos to become naturalized United States citizens and/or to obtain permanent residency status.
 - c. Developing and implementing a culturally competent voter registration campaign, particularly targeting young United States Latino citizens.
 - d. Providing more opportunities for Latino adults to improve their English skills through occupation-specific English as a Second Language and/or English for Speakers of Other Languages classes.
2. Provide County Latino youth with more opportunities to maximize their leadership capacity.
 - a. This should include participation in structured and culturally and linguistically competent leadership programs that offer both experiential and theoretical learning.

Entities Responsible: Latino youth and families, the County Executive's Office, Board of Elections, and League of Women Voters would all take the lead enlisting the assistance of community stakeholders (community and faith-based organizations, civic organizations, sports leagues, and business community).

Expected Outcome: Latino youth and their families in the County are active participants in the community and are contributing to the County's future.

Indicators of Performance: Survey every two years to collect information on the Latino community's perspective of its participation and success with social integration.



6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE MONITORING

The County's societal and political will to address the many issues raised in this report are in question. Will County residents save a generation of Latino youth who currently face major barriers to success and life fulfillments? Will County providers address the crises of distrust between Latinos and those who provide services? Will the County address cultural differences among County residents so that the Latino community is viewed as part of the County's diverse strength? Will the County as community serve the greater good for the common good? Will all County residents choose to work together to improve the lives of our Latino youth and their families which will also improve the growth and life of the entire County? Will Latino youth and their families engage in activities and processes that connect them more fully to the fabric of the County? The future for County residents is in their own hands. All County residents need to ensure that the research, the effort, the intelligence and the thoughtfulness of this Report are not lost, nor ignored, but will be used as a guide for change. It is critical that all readers of this Report recognize their role and obligation in responding to the recommendations and in creating a County where all youth can thrive.

The Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee calls for the establishment of effective accountability mechanisms in order to guarantee the successful implementation of the recommendations presented in this document. This accountability structure will make it possible for agencies and community members to share in the progress of the work, as well as to hold each other accountable. Toward these ends, the following steps are recommended:

1. A County oversight commission will be established to monitor the progress of efforts. This group will have representation reflective of the Latino Youth Collaborative Steering Committee and will convene quarterly to receive updates and address issues.
2. Each agency responsible for the implementation of a recommendation will provide information regarding the progress being made or barriers that are encountered. A standard reporting format will be developed for responsible parties to use to provide monthly and/or quarterly updates on each of the recommendations.
3. Interim reports, identifying major successes and barriers to implementation, will be completed every 6 months by each responsible party.
4. Responsible organizations will include recommendations from this document in any annual or strategic planning efforts affecting their organization. If they already have a strategic plan in place, they will make changes to the plan to reflect these priorities and actions.
5. Any policy, procedural, or budgetary changes that are needed to implement these recommendations will be approved by the respective bodies during their pertinent time frames.
6. At the end of the first year, the County Executive, County Council, and Board of Education will convene with the Latino Youth Oversight Commission to assess the progress of the year, discuss and decide on needed changes, and recommit to the work called for in this document.

